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Province of British Columbia

Ministry of Social Services and Housing

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To the Honourable David Lam
Lieutenant-Governor of the
Province of British Columbia

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991.

Joan Smallwood
Minister of Social Services

To the Honourable Joan Smallwood
Minister of Social Services

Madam:

I am pleased to submit for your consideration the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1991.

Robert F. Cronin
Deputy Minister

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SECTION 1

Introduction

Mission Statement

The ministry serves the people of British Columbia by helping them during times of need and assisting them to regain or achieve self-sufficiency.

The ministry has a statutory mandate to provide:

- Child Protection Programs
- Income Security Programs
- Services for People with Mental Handicaps
- Social Housing Programs

As determined by government, other social services may also be provided.

Ministry Goals

The following goals have been established to achieve the ministry's mission:

1. To provide financial assistance and support services to eligible individuals, and to assist those persons to retain or regain financial independence.
2. To provide care and/or support services which assist individuals with mental handicaps to achieve maximum independence and to participate as full members of their communities.
3. To receive and investigate reports of abuse and neglect of children. To fulfill this goal in a manner which maintains or restores the integrity of the family whenever possible.
4. To assist seniors, the disabled and low-income individuals to reduce their housing costs for suitable housing.
5. To initiate measures to increase the supply of affordable rental housing.

SECTION 2

Financial Report

Financial Report

TABLE 1
Summary of Estimates and Expenditures by Major Program Classification, 1990/91 — ($Millions)

	Authorized Budget[1]	Actual Expenditures
Income Assistance Programs[2]	1,024.2	1,018.1
Rehabilitation and Support Services	238.5	230.8
Services to Families and Children	162.6	160.9
Services to Seniors	46.4	42.2
Direct Community Services	151.4	149.9
Administration[3]	63.8	62.1
Housing	32.6	31.0
Opportunities to Independence	38.9	38.7
At Home Program	5.6	1.6
Total	1,764.0	1,735.3

Detailed figures on ministry expenditures are available from *Public Accounts, 1990/91, Volume 1,* published by the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations.

[1] Main Estimates Voted (details are available from *Estimates,* Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1991, published by the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations) as adjusted for transfers of funds during the fiscal year.

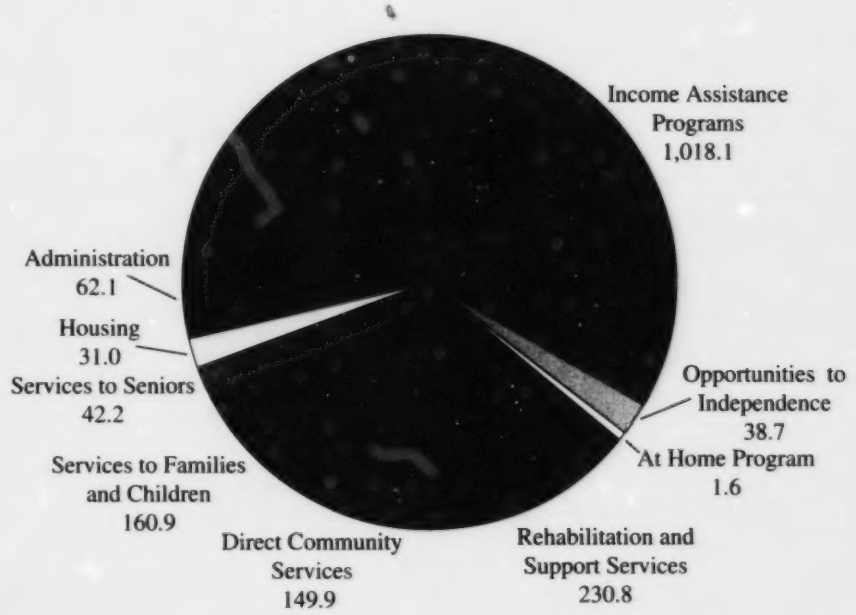
[2] Includes Health Care and Dental Care.

[3] Includes Minister's Office.

TABLE 2
Actual Expenditures, Comparison of Fiscal Years 1986/87 to 1990/91 — ($Thousands)

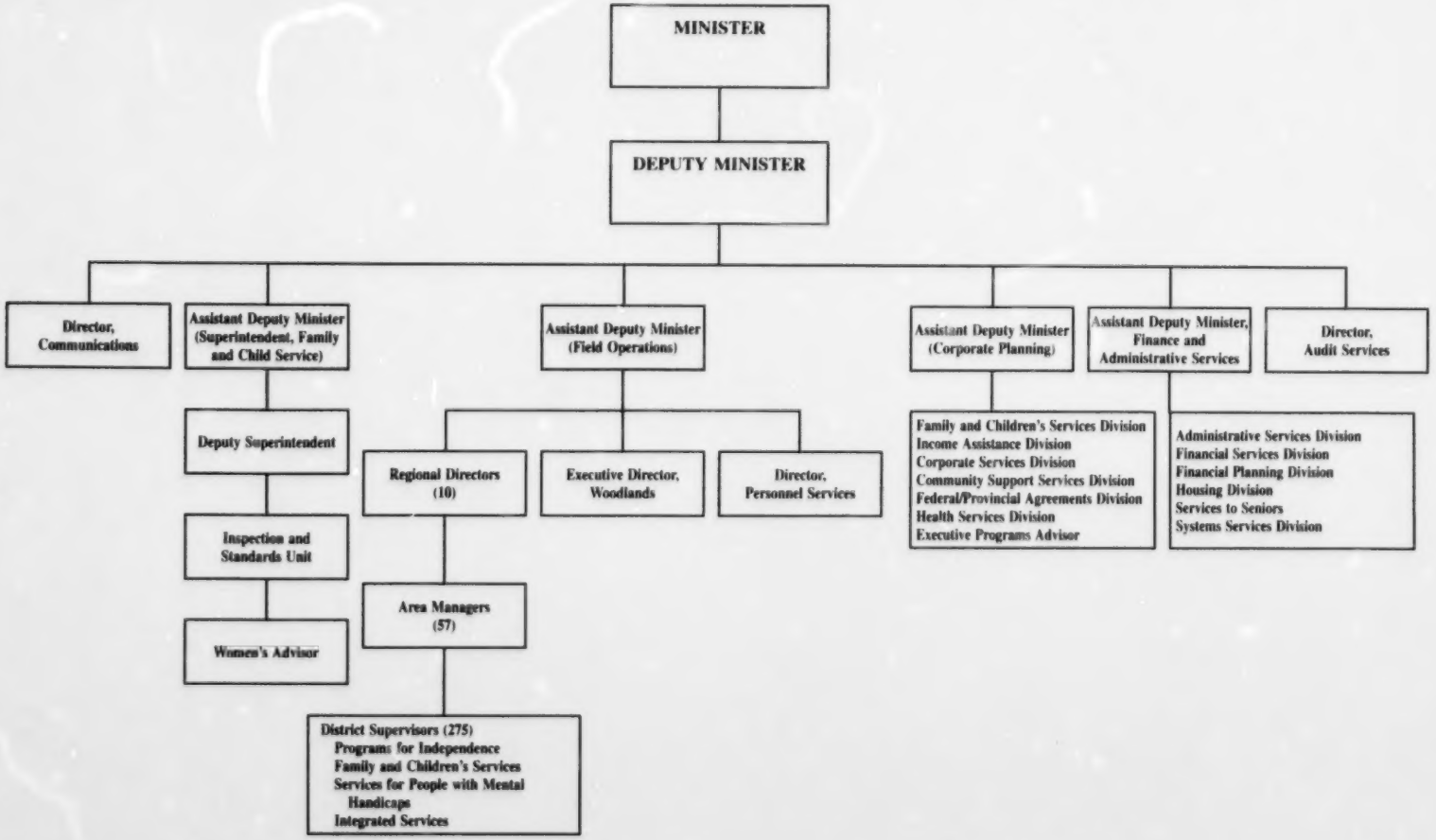
Year	Income Assistance and Handicapped Benefits	Other Ministry Programs	Total Ministry Expenditure
1990/91	945,857	789,451	1,735,308
1989/90	884,329	666,897	1,551,226
1988/89	868,283	588,109	1,456,392
1987/88	864,959	508,488	1,373,447
1986/87	856,354	644,626	1,500,980

Ministry Expenditures by Major Program Division ($ millions) 1990/91



SECTION 3
Organization

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING, MARCH 31, 1991

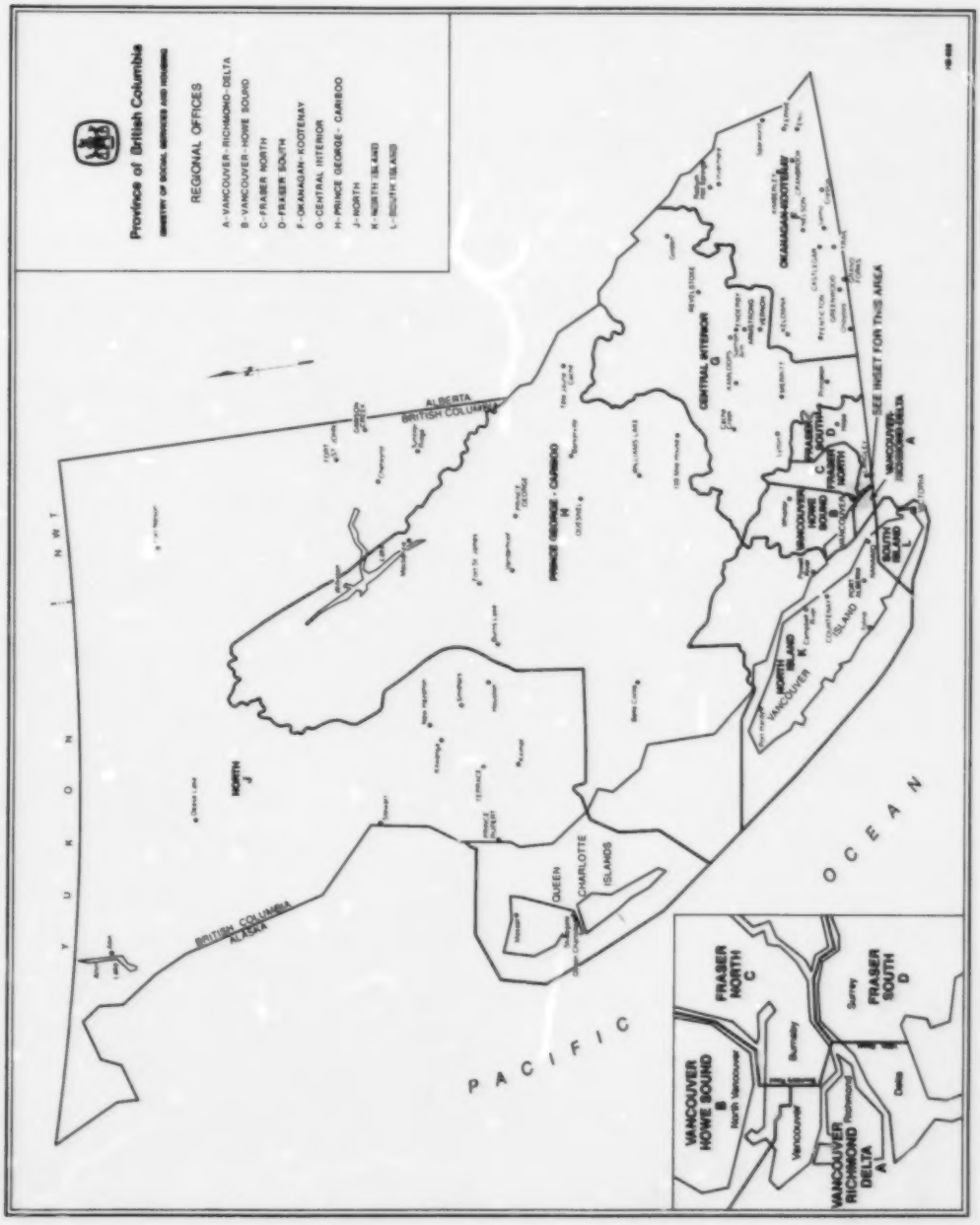


Ministry Organization

Following a major reorganization in 1988/89, the ministry now has a service delivery structure comprising ten regions which supports a strong community-based service delivery model.

Each region is divided into areas, and then districts, for each of three program areas — income assistance, family and children's services and services for people with mental handicaps. In a few areas of small population, services are provided by integrated offices. There are over 300 district offices throughout the province.

Services are provided directly by ministry staff and by a range of individuals and community organizations working in partnership with the ministry.


Province of British Columbia
REGIONAL OFFICES
A-VANCOUVER - RICHMOND - DELTA
B-VANCOUVER - HOWE SOUND
C-FRASER NORTH
D-FRASER SOUTH
F-OKANAGAN - KOOTENAY
G-CENTRAL INTERIOR
H-PRINCE GEORGE - CARIBOO
J-NORTH
K-NORTH ISLAND
L-SOUTH ISLAND
ALBERTA
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Y U K O N
N W T
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALASKA
NORTH
J
PRINCE GEORGE - CARIBOO
H
CENTRAL INTERIOR
G
OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY
F
FRASER NORTH
C
FRASER SOUTH
D
VANCOUVER HOWE SOUND
B
VANCOUVER RICHMOND DELTA
A
SEE INSET FOR THIS AREA
NORTH ISLAND
K
SOUTH ISLAND
L
QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS
PACIFIC
OCEAN
North Vancouver
Burnaby
Vancouver
Richmond
Surrey
Delta

The Regions

REGION A

Region A (Vancouver-Richmond-Delta), located on the southwest coast of the Lower Mainland, serves Richmond, Delta and the southern 2/3 of Vancouver.

The People — The population is 555,180. The region experienced rapid population growth in the late 1980s, due largely to immigration. Twenty per cent of Vancouver's population is considered visible minority, and one person in five has a first language other than English.

The Economy — The population increase has created a heavy demand for housing, which has affected the supply and affordability of rental accommodation.

The Highlights — Region A initiated planning for a Multicultural Family Support Services Society office; it will offer emergency services, in their own languages, for women and children forced to leave home because of family violence.

The region was active in the Child and Youth Committee, promoting effective partnerships with other ministries and service agencies.

Organizations serving people with mental handicaps were supported through an equity program. Region A provided under-financed organizations with additional funds, enabling them to attract and retain skilled staff by paying competitive salaries. The region also created a fourth service delivery team to better meet the growing needs of families of people with a mental handicap.

REGION B

Region B (Vancouver-Howe Sound) contains both the urban areas of Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver, and the less-populated areas of Howe Sound.

The People — The population totals 312,280. Population growth continues in the urban parts of the region, and the large influx of immigrants and refugees creates special requirements for such services as translation, culturally-sensitive daycare and support services.

The region is home to seven Indian bands as well as a large urban Aboriginal population. Continuing progress is expected toward the goal of Aboriginal responsibility and control of social services.

The Economy — Housing demand, exacerbated by the tendency of newcomers to British Columbia to settle initially in Vancouver, will continue.

The Highlights — A program was launched to provide Aboriginal street children with education and life skills. The Aires Program is funded by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing and the Vancouver School Board, and run by the Urban Native Youth Association.

A new Programs for Independence office was opened at 666 East Hastings Street.

To enhance services, the staff of the Services to People with Mental Handicaps office was split into two teams, one dedicated to adult clients, the other to children.

As an extension to its cross-cultural training program, the region contracted with the Native Education Centre to provide training to ministry caregivers, their natural children and Aboriginal children-in-care.

The Adolescent Services Unit opened a residential group home to care for street children-in-care who are HIV-positive.

Day Care Support programs were opened in Vancouver and on the North Shore to support unlicensed facilities.

The region awarded a contract to the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society to provide family and youth counselling to the Chinese community.

REGION C

The Lower Mainland communities of Burnaby, New Westminster, Coquitlam, Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Mission form Region C (Fraser North).

The People — The population of Region C is 429,985. The region is experiencing rapid population growth, notably of young families with children. By 1995 it is expected that the region will be home to 13 per cent of British Columbia's child population.

The Economy — The area is increasingly affected by demand for affordable housing, which will continue to strain the resources of those on fixed and low incomes and persons with disabilities.

The Highlights — Day Care Support is now available in three communities. Funding enabled Burnaby-New Westminster and Maple Ridge to join Mission in offering this program. It provides parents with a register of approved unlicensed day care givers in their vicinity.

Bed space was increased at the Maple Ridge Transition Home in response to the needs of the community's growing population.

Adolescents and their families in Mission, Maple Ridge, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam and Port Moody received new services through the Reconnect program and community-based teen/parent counselling.

Since September, a specialized unit has been providing a full range of services to the region's adoptive parents as well as services related to adoption reunion. The unit brings together staff who had been working with two client groups — adoptive parents from the entire region and permanent wards from the Burnaby-New Westminster area. Social workers prepare wards for adoption or, where they are too old to be adopted, for independence.

Services to People with Mental Handicaps introduced an At Home program to help families who have a severely disabled child. In addition, several homes were developed to support people with mental handicaps living in the community, and day programs were expanded.

REGION D

Region D (Fraser South), takes in the urban, suburban and rural communities of Surrey, White Rock, Langley, Fort Langley, Aldergrove, Matsqui/Clearbrook, Chilliwack, Agassiz, Hope, Boston Bar and North Bend.

The People — Region D has a population of 486,870, and continues to experience burgeoning growth. There is growing economic and ethnic diversity in the region and, in some areas, a significant Aboriginal population. Some areas are becoming increasingly popular for seniors, others for families with young children.

The Economy — The ongoing population growth places increased demand and pressure on government services at all levels, particularly in the social, educational and health sectors. There is a continuing need for low and moderate cost housing.

The Highlights — A new hostel providing temporary emergency housing for single men opened in Surrey.

Additional funding was provided to transition houses to enhance the quality of service available, particularly in the areas of staffing and services for children.

Staff in two Region D offices contributed to the development and implementation of the enhanced Programs for Independence management information system by participating in pilot testing of the new electronic system.

REGION F

Region F (Okanagan-Kootenay) covers the southeast corner of the province, bounded by the Alberta border to the east, the Selkirk and Monashee Ranges to the north, Okanagan Lake to the west, and the U.S. border to the south.

The People — The regional population is 300,740. Very rapid population growth is occurring in the Okanagan, particularly in Kelowna.

The Economy — The Central Okanagan is experiencing a housing boom, with new housing starts up 7 per cent over the previous year. The South Okanagan, with its major city of Penticton, shows steady growth, with many seniors choosing it as their place of retirement. This area relies heavily on the tourism industry. The West Kootenay, heavily reliant on primary industries, has been experiencing some turmoil resulting from significant changes in mining, lumber and pulp production. The East Kootenay continues in its gradual shift from dependence on primary resource industry to the service industries.

The Highlights — Services to People with Mental Handicaps saw substantial activity in the direction of moving people from institutional to community-based homes. Half of the original 70 occupants of the Endicott Centre in Creston were placed in the community; Beaverlodge in Oliver was reduced from 30 beds to two small homes of six beds each, the others being placed elsewhere in the community; and the 16-bed Kirby Lodge was closed.

A project to deliver special needs day care services through regular day care centres was developed in Kelowna. And four programs were developed for seniors with mental handicaps.

Throughout the region there was continued emphasis on initiatives to strengthen the family and preventive family support services in response to the diverse pressures resulting from population increases and the effects of the economic recession. A semi-independent living program for youth in transition was developed in the Central Okanagan, along with other resources such as therapeutic placements in family home settings, and youth resources counsellors who focus on closing the gap between school and home.

Initiatives to help income assistance recipients to regain their independence were emphasized; they included a number of projects developed under the Regionally-Initiated Special Employment (RISE) Program. The Employment Opportunity Program continued to place many income assistance recipients into wage-subsidized on-the-job training opportunities, in this highly successful cooperative venture with local businesses. The Community Tourism Employment Training Program was used extensively, particularly in the East Kootenay, where 78 contracts were undertaken.

REGION G

Region G (Central Interior) covers the south central interior of the province, stretching from Lillooet in the west to the Alberta border, and from Clearwater in the north to Princeton in the south. Six distinct geographic areas provide natural boundaries around which the regional areas were created.

The People — The regional population of 210,830 is concentrated in the three major population centres of Kamloops, Vernon and Salmon Arm. The region's economy is founded on the resource-based industries of pulp and paper, mining and agriculture, as well as service-based industries related to tourism.

The Highlights — A number of community-directed comprehensive surveys were completed; the information they provided is guiding efforts to improve service quality.

Regionally Initiated Special Employment (RISE) projects found work for a significant number of income assistance clients.

Each community in the region has a Child and Youth Committee. In Vernon and Kamloops, Community Advisory Committees have been established to help set priorities for services to people with mental handicaps.

A unique protocol was signed in October with the Spallumcheen Indian Band, giving it authority in welfare matters involving Band children and families, regardless of where these children or families live.

REGION H

Region H (Prince George-Cariboo) covers 900,000 square kilometres in the geographical centre of British Columbia. Its boundaries extend from 100 Mile House in the south to Fort Ware (north of Mackenzie) in the north, and from Burns Lake in the west to the Alberta border in the east.

The People — The regional population of 169,380 is concentrated in three centres: Prince George, Quesnel and Williams Lake. Almost half the population lives in Prince George. The population is relatively young, and families tend to be made up of young children. An increasing percentage of the population (10 per cent) is Aboriginal.

The Economy — Region H has experienced very high unemployment rates. The cyclical and seasonal nature of the resource-based industries of lumber, pulp and paper, mining and agriculture often means there is limited opportunity for many clients to achieve independence. There is plenty of affordable housing, and the percentage of homeowners is higher than for the province as a whole.

The Highlights — A regional Child and Youth Committee was set up to ensure continued cooperation among the ministries involved in joint projects. One such project is the Children's Mental Health Centre planned for Prince George; it will be funded by the Ministries of Social Services and Housing, Health and Attorney General.

The region continued to work with various Indian bands and tribal councils towards their goal of an independent child welfare program.

REGION J

Geographically the largest of the ministry's regions, Region J (North) stretches from the Queen Charlotte Islands in the west to the Alberta border in the east and the Yukon and Northwest Territories in the north. The southern boundary traces a line northward along the west shores of the Babine, Takla, Stuart and Williston Lakes, then reaches south again to the 54th parallel.

The People — Region J covers the largest area and the smallest population of all regions. The population of 136,965, which is on the decline, is found mainly in rural communities and small urban centres. The average age is younger than for the province as a whole, there is a higher percentage of men and the labour force is generally less well-educated. The large Aboriginal population (19 per cent) includes the Haida, Nishga, Gitksan'Wet'sueten and Treaty 8 Bands.

The Economy — The economy of the region remains resource-based and, as such, is susceptible to world markets. Unemployment has increased slightly, but differs from community to community. Housing and land prices have remained stable.

The Highlights — Resources for Aboriginal children opened in Massett, Hazleton and Fort St. John, and all are in full use. The response of the Aboriginal communities has been enthusiastic and, most important, these small resources have spawned ideas and initiatives for further cooperative ventures with Aboriginal communities.

Community consultation took place across the region on various issues. Meetings were held to gather ideas and input on services for people with handicaps, and local Child and Youth Committees were encouraged to seek community input on child welfare issues.

A Families First program was introduced in Tumbler Ridge.

In cooperation with the Ministry Responsible for Women's Programs, submissions were made to have child care workers added to transition homes in the north. And, in cooperation with other ministries, a study was initiated to look into providing family counselling in the Peace River area.

REGION K

Central and Northern Vancouver Island, from Ladysmith to Port Hardy, and the Powell River area on the Mainland make up Region K (North Island). The region is a mix of small inland and coastal cities and towns separated by park and wilderness areas.

The People — Region K supports a population of 248,970 including a significant Aboriginal population. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of elderly as the North Island has become a destination for retirees.

The Economy — The regional economy is centred on tourism, and on the resource-based industries of logging, pulp and paper, commercial and sports fishing, mining and fish farming. The area's dependence on primary industries makes it particularly susceptible to economic downturns, and the emphasis on service-sector jobs makes it difficult for single parents receiving income assistance to achieve independence. Unemployment is the highest in the province. There is a shortage of housing, particularly for low-income families. Vacancy rates have been hovering between zero and one per cent.

The Highlights — Region K continued to build partnerships with stakeholders and client groups in the area of Services to People with Mental Handicaps. Community Advisory Committees are now well established in each community in North Island.

Employment initiatives projects begun during the previous year started to show results, as income assistance clients took steps towards independence. Literacy projects exist in each North Island community.

Quality service continued to be an important thrust throughout the region, with staff actively involved in several projects. The major theme of these was talking with and listening to clients.

Transition houses were supported in two new locations in the region, Comox and Ucluelet.

Family and Children's Services focussed on improving inter-agency cooperation by revitalizing Child and Youth Committees, and placed greater emphasis on consulting with both clients and stakeholders. A program for young sexual offenders opened in Campbell River.

A Women's Conference was held for the whole region, and a Financial Assistance Workers' Conference was held in Powell River.

REGION L

Region L (South Island) serves the southern portion of Vancouver Island, from Chemainus in the north to Victoria in the south, and all the Gulf Islands as far north as Thetis Island.

The People — The population of Region L is 349,905. The northern communities are rural, and are distinguished by a large Aboriginal population including the Cowichan Band, the largest in the province. In the south, there are several Aboriginal communities. Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria together form the largest population base. The region has been seen as a retirement community, and has a larger proportion of seniors than elsewhere in the province.

The Economy — The economy in the northern part of the region is based on the lumber and fishing industries. The Department of National Defence is the largest employer in the Greater Victoria area. The provincial government, a major employer particularly of women, is situated in Victoria. The service sector is the major growth area for new jobs. Housing costs are high, and rental vacancy rates were below one per cent as of April 1990.

The Highlights — In the Duncan-Cowichan area, Family and Children's Services were specialized for intake, family service, resources and adoption. Staff helped the community to plan and implement consultations on services to teens. A parent mediation service was started to assist in cases of parent-teen conflict.

In the Capital Regional District (CRD), restructuring in Family and Children's Services and Programs for Independence made programs more effective and more responsive to the needs of the community. Day Care Support Services were initiated to assist day care providers in Sooke and the Western Communities, and the CRD. A registry was set up to give parents information about day care services in the CRD.

Funding went to the Native Friendship Centre to provide counselling and family support services to Aboriginal people in the CRD.

Development began on four residential beds for young offenders in the care of the Superintendent who have alcohol and drug problems. Funding was provided by the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Labour (Alcohol and Drug) programs.

Services for People with Mental Handicaps saw larger community facilities phased out, and clients placed in more home-like residences in the community.

AFTER HOURS PROGRAM

Outside regular working hours, services are provided through the After Hours Program. The After Hours Program was introduced in the 1989/90 fiscal year as part of the ministry's continuing commitment to ensuring that services are distributed equally to all regions of the province.

Structure — The After Hours Program includes the Provincial After Hours Line, a toll-free number which gives professional/community agencies and caregivers access to ministry child welfare services. When an emergency occurs in a community, the professional involved can call the Provincial After Hours Line.

The Helpline for Children is also answered by the After Hours Program. This toll-free number is a vital link in the ministry's child protection services. Anyone can reach the Helpline by dialing 0 and asking for Zenith 1234.

Staff answering the Provincial After Hours Line and the Helpline for Children assess the situation and either deal with the call directly or forward it to a social worker or agency in the caller's community.

In the Lower Mainland direct intervention is provided, when required, through offices located in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland and staffed around the clock. Smaller communities (Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna, Eastern Valley, Nanaimo and Victoria) have regional After Hours offices staffed during peak times. The remainder of the province is served by regular staff who are called out by the Provincial After Hours Line on an as-needed basis.

Services — The After Hours Program provides services in all three program areas:

Family and Children's Services:

— Assessment and investigation of child protection calls. Urgent situations are investigated immediately. If the situation does not require immediate intervention, it is referred to the appropriate district office on the next working day.

— Services for children in care of the Superintendent of Family and Children's Services

— Support services for caregivers

— Repatriation of children to an appropriate caregiver

Programs for Independence:

— Food and/or shelter for clients in emergency situations. Hostel and Transition House programs are the primary method of delivering this service.

Services for People with Mental Handicaps:

— Emergency services for people with mental handicaps, primarily involving stabilization until the next working day.

Communication — In 1990 a new component, the Community Information System, was added to the After Hours Program. The Community Information System is an inter-active on-line communications network with two important features.

First, it gives After Hours staff immediate access to lists of community services, allowing them to refer calls to the most appropriate local agency or staff person. Local staff are also able to update the lists to keep them current. Second, the system allows After Hours staff to keep their daytime counterparts up-to-date on case developments that occur after regular office hours. After Hours staff record information about nocturnal case activities on the computer system, and staff in the district offices receive the information when they sign on to the system the next working day.

Highlights — In 1990/91, the After Hours response was enhanced by completion of the network of After Hours offices for mid-sized communities throughout the province. Response time for urgent situations was improved by having staff on site during peak times. Working relationships with community agencies were enhanced by an increased presence in the community.

SECTION 4

Superintendent of Family and Child Service

SUPERINTENDENT OF FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICE

The Superintendent of Family and Child Service is appointed by the Minister to represent the rights and interests of the children of British Columbia when there is a need for protection, guardianship or support services.

The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of the *Family and Child Service Act* and the *Adoption Act.*

The Superintendent acts directly and by delegation. Duties and functions include providing assistance and advice in individual cases, and monitoring the service on behalf of children and their families.

- ***Leadership:*** The Superintendent provides overall leadership for services to families and children, and offers guidance and support.
- ***Setting Standards:*** The Superintendent sets practice standards and expectations to ensure consistency; ensures that programs and legislative mandates are carried out in a uniform manner; establishes expectations for acceptable levels of service delivery; and ensures accountability for expenditures and quality of services provided.
- ***Delegation:*** The Superintendent delegates authority and ensures that delegates meet prescribed standards of education, training, experience, skills and knowledge.
- ***Assistance and Advice:*** The Superintendent provides assistance, advice, consultation and direction on individual case matters; critical incident reviews; special needs adoption; legal consultation and review of matters to be appealed; and case situations which may result in a need to address policy, procedures and practice.
- ***Monitoring and Review:*** In July 1988, the Office of the Superintendent was reorganized to emphasize its monitoring role. Cases which come to the direct attention of the Superintendent include: case review by region; Family and Child Service audits (to ensure the appropriate methods of case review are in place and that legislation, policy and procedures are being complied with); and Superintendent reviews (to ensure appropriate use of delegated authority, and that practice is consistent with the provision of safety and well-being for the child).

The Office of the Superintendent includes the Superintendent and two Deputy Superintendents, staff who review cases and undertake projects as required, and the Inspection and Standards Unit, which conducts audits and reviews of actions taken under the *Family and Child Service Act.*

SECTION 5

Family and Children's Services

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Highlights of 1990/91

- The *Family and Child Service Amendment Act* was introduced in the 1990 spring legislative session. It requires that, upon apprehending a child, the Superintendent of Family and Child Services will provide the parents with a copy of the Report to Court prior to the initial court hearing.
- The Child and Youth Secretariat was established in response to the Ombudsman's Report on Public Services to Children, Youth and their Families in British Columbia: the Need for Integration. The secretariat will ensure the coordination and implementation of inter-ministry policies, protocols and programs, and review issues related to services for children and youth. The secretariat consists of assistant deputy ministers of Education, Health, Social Services and Housing and Solicitor General, and four senior staff seconded from ministries which provide services to children and youth.
- October 21–27, 1990 was proclaimed Foster Parent Week to recognize the invaluable contribution that foster families make to the children of British Columbia.
- Ten foster families were chosen to receive the first Lieutenant-Governor's Foster Families Award in June 1990 in recognition of their outstanding contribution in a particular area of foster parenting. Foster parents are nominated by their neighbors, by children they cared for, by social workers, and by other foster parents.
- The *Adoption Amendment Act* was introduced in July 1990 to allow for the licensing of nonprofit agencies to provide full adoption services to British Columbia citizens. Regulations are currently being drafted.

INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The objectives of the Family and Children's Services are to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to assist with the preservation of the family unit. Programs are offered under the statutory authority of the *Family and Child Service Act*, the *Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) Act*, the *Adoption Act* and the *Family Relations Act*.

Family and Children's Services provide a continuum of programs, from preventive programs which support and maintain families, to adoption which provides a permanent home for children who are unable to remain with their families. Family Support Services help families stay together and function as independently as possible. Child Protection Services programs ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Residential Services for Children-in-Care provide specialized parenting for children with behavioral, emotional or physical problems when their own families are unable to care for them. Adoption Services find permanent homes for children whose families are unable to care for them.

Family Support Services

Family Support Services promote and maintain the integrity of the family unit through counselling, parent training, temporary shelter, and rehabilitation resources to help British Columbia's families function as independently as possible in their own communities.

Expenditures for the 1990/91 fiscal year totalled $56.97 million.

Programs include: Children's Rehabilitation Resources, Respite Resources, Family Support Homemakers, Special Services to Children and Families, the Families First program, Non-Residential Resources, and Reconnect.

Children's Rehabilitation Resources

Rehabilitation resources help young people who are having difficulty in school — or who have dropped out of school — achieve the academic and life skills they need to re-enter the school system or continue to further training or employment.

The programs are jointly funded by this ministry, the Ministry of Education, and local school districts.

In 1990/91, the ministry purchased the services of 363 child care workers to provide behavioral management and counselling to students and their families. The ministry also contributed more than $7 million towards program expenses. The Ministry of Education provided funding for program teachers, facilities, resources and administration. There were 172 programs in operation.

TABLE 3

Rehabilitation Resources, Activities and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Contracted Programs	Children Served/ School Year	Child Care Workers	Annual Expenditures
1990/91	172	7,460	363	$7,022,050
1989/90	111	5,490	265	6,729,456
1988/89	111	5,100	215	6,016,006
1987/88	115	5,121	230	5,287,226
1986/87	123	3,667	226	4,900,896

Admission to the program is through an advisory committee with representation from the school district, this ministry, the contracting agency and when appropriate, probation and health personnel. Students are assigned to the programs for one school term at a time.

Respite Resources

Respite resources are available for families of children with special needs who are experiencing a temporary crisis or who need relief from providing 24-hour care to their children. The program offers intermittent out-of-home care for children with special needs to give families a needed break and to avoid further difficulties which might lead to the disruption of the family. The goal of the program at all times is to maintain the integrity of the family.

Family Support Homemakers

Family support homemakers provide household management or child care services for adults with mental handicaps who are in financial need, families with handicapped children or families requiring support.

The ministry purchases homemaker services from both proprietary agencies and nonprofit societies at a rate set by the Ministry of Health. Families contribute to the cost of the service according to their incomes.

In 1990/91, an average of 1,956 families and/or children were served each month. Workers provided 652,007 hours of service.

TABLE 4

Family Support Homemakers, Activities and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Number of Nonprofit Societies Contracted	Number of Proprietary Agencies Contracted	Families and Individuals Served/Month	Annual Expenditure
1990/91	92	34	1,956	$6,179,342
1989/90	82	24	2,043	5,535,500
1988/89	83	22	1,846[1]	5,123,760
1987/88	87	13	1,167	4,622,106
1986/87	88	13[2]	1,123	3,958,010

[1] A new system was implemented in 1988/89 which resulted in more accurate figures of the families and individuals served.

[2] Includes four independent caregivers.

Special Services to Children and Families

The services of child care workers are available for families with children who have exceptional physical, social or behavioral needs. The program supports families in caring for their children so they can remain in their own communities.

The ministry purchases the services of child care workers from nonprofit societies or private companies.

In 1990/91, an average of 2,140 children received assistance under this program each month.

TABLE 5

Special Services to Children and Families, Activities and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Societies/ Agencies Contracted	Children Served /Month	Average Cost /Hour	Average Cost/Month /Child	Annual Expenditures
1990/91	120	2,140	$19.19	$411	$10,546,942
1989/90	126	1,506	16.46	530	9,591,630
1988/89[1]	87	1,156	15.68	612	8,810,962
1987/88	82	1,747	13.89	396	8,293,870
1986/87	78	1,324	13.72	424	6,730,131

[1] In previous years, the figures given represented the number of family members served. For 1988/89, the figures given represent the number of children served.

Families First

The Families First program is part of the provincial government's initiative of 1988 to support and strengthen the family. The purposes of the program are to promote positive parenting, develop services for special needs children and their families, increase local participation in service delivery and support family independence.

The ministry contracts with societies to provide a variety of services including family advancement workers, parent training, support to young parents and the Nobody's Perfect and Supportive Living programs.

Family Advancement Worker Program

The ministry contracts the services of family advancement workers to help parents to fulfill their responsibilities to their children. The workers work with the schools to identify children who may be at risk. Their families are then referred to the

program and offered counselling in child care, behavior management and household management.

Parent Training

Parent training uses homemakers to provide training for parents in basic coping skills, child guidance and discipline strategies, communications and household management.

Support to Young Parents

These programs offer individual and supportive counselling to young and expectant mothers. Parent training skills are emphasized, and assistance is given in developing a support network in the community.

Nobody's Perfect

Nobody's Perfect teaches parenting skills to young parents who are culturally, socially or geographically isolated and who have children aged five or under. The program is delivered through the Ministry of Social Services and Housing and the Ministry of Health, with the support of the federal government.

Supportive Living

Supportive Living programs offer women in the last trimester of pregnancy a place to live, prenatal care, life skills training, parent training, and alcohol and drug abuse education. Assistance continues after the birth, and the mothers are given support in making the decision to choose adoption or parenting.

Non-Residential Resources

The ministry contracts services from nonprofit societies to provide assessments, counselling, family support and work preparation and life skills for families and children-in-care.

The programs are offered to help prepare families to live independently and responsibly, to minimize placement changes for children-in-care and to help them to reintegrate to community resources and family living situations where appropriate.

Reconnect

Reconnect was created to help young people living on the street leave it for a healthier life style. Because street kids often have little contact with their families or communities, the program attempts to re-establish this contact. Reconnect workers also coordinate available social services and resources to ensure that each young person receives the services needed, and that they are tracked in the system.

Prevention is a major objective of Reconnect, and a great deal of energy is spent encouraging children to return to their families and communities before they get hooked on street life.

There were 28 Reconnect programs in operation across the province in 1990/91; 920 youths were served. The budget allocation was over $2.19 million.

Child Protection Services

Child care services are provided under the mandate of the *Family and Child Service Act* for children under the age of 19 and their families who live in British Columbia. The objective of these services is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children of British Columbia.

The Superintendent of Family and Child Service has a statutory obligation to investigate all reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, and to apprehend and bring before the Court those children who are believed to be in need of protection.

Inter-Ministry Child Abuse Handbook

First published in 1979, the *Inter-Ministry Child Abuse Handbook* details the provincial government's integrated response to child abuse and neglect.

The third edition, released in 1989, was produced by this ministry along with the Ministries of Attorney General, Health, Solicitor General and Education. It includes a section describing an integrated approach to investigation and intervention, and contains specific protocols for responding to particular situations.

The handbook is available from Crown Publications.

Helpline for Children

The Helpline for Children is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The toll-free number is a vital link in the ministry's child protection services. Anyone can reach the Helpline by dialing 0 and asking for Zenith 1234.

Native Child Welfare

A separate section on native child welfare was established in the Family and Children's Services policy manual. The move reflects a commitment to involving the aboriginal community in planning for their children and families, and to the general goal of aboriginal people assuming greater responsibility for, and control over, their child welfare matters.

A number of provincial, regional and local initiatives were undertaken in the area of training and resource development. An information package outlining historical and current approaches to aboriginal child welfare was produced and circulated widely.

TABLE 6

Child Protection Investigations, by Reason, 1990/91

Reason	Investigations
Physical Abuse	6,349
Sexual Abuse	6,412
Neglect	8,846
Emotional Abuse	1,033
Other	4,623
Multiple	4,166
Total	31,429

TABLE 7
Number of Children Admitted to Care, by Reason of Admission, 1990/91

Reason	Children Admitted
SHORT TERM CARE	
Parental Mental or Emotional Condition	785
Parental Physical Illness	188
Marital Conflict	43
Parent-Child Conflict	1,000
Awaiting Adoption Placement	32
SPECIAL CARE	
Child's Mental or Emotional Condition	176
Child's Physical Handicap	19
Child's Mental Handicap	30
Child's Emotional Disorder	68
PROTECTION REQUIRED	
Physical Abuse	549
Sexual Abuse	213
Abandonment	300
Death of Caregiver (Guardianship Unclear)	20
Absence of Parent(s)	380
Disability of Parent(s)	737
Neglect of Parent	565
Deprivation of Necessary Medical Care	23
Absent from Home and Endangered	449
OTHER	
Death of Guardian(s)	52
Transfer of Guardianship or Custody	1
Relinquished for Adoption	14
Request by Other Province or Country	43
Total	5,687

TABLE 8
Number of Children Admitted to Care, by Legal Status, 1990/91

Legal Status	Children Admitted
Family and Child Service Act Agreements	2,456
Before Court (F&CS Act)	3,103
Temporary Wards (F&CS Act)	—
Permanent Wards (F&CS Act)	—
Family Relations Act and Other Wards	64
Adoption Act Wards	16
Wards of Other Jurisdictions	48
Total	5,687

TABLE 9
Number of Children-in-Care, During and at end of Fiscal Year, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	During Year	March 31
1990/91	12,057	6,084
1989/90	12,552	6,224
1988/89	12,219	6,376
1987/88	12,511	6,459
1986/87	12,849	6,832

TABLE 10
Number of Children-in-Care, by Age and Legal Status, as of March 31, 1991

Status	Under 3	3–5	6–11	12–15	16–18	Total
Agreements	91	75	237	438	341	1,182
F&CS Act[1] (Before Court)	108	107	154	194	64	627
F&CS Act (Temporary Ward)	175	190	297	288	188	1,138
F&CS Act (Permanent Ward)	134	160	403	774	1,186	2,657
FRA[2] and Other Wards	5	12	29	64	145	255
Adoption Wards	94	37	15	9	7	162
Other Jurisdiction Wards	1	3	11	27	21	63
Total	608	584	1,146	1,794	1,952	6,084

[1] *Family and Child Service Act*
[2] *Family Relations Act*

TABLE 11

Number of Children-in-Care and Legal Status, by Region, as of March 31, 1991

Region	Short Term Agreements	Special Care Agreements	Before Court	Temporary Wards	Permanent Wards	FRA[1] and Other Wards	Adoption Wards	Other Wards	Total
A	60	108	56	132	386	14	25	—	781
B	57	61	57	126	290	13	13	7	624
C	73	68	74	113	338	17	25	15	723
D	62	71	67	153	358	24	29	11	775
F	55	80	56	148	194	16	15	8	572
G	49	84	35	91	244	17	13	12	545
H	45	53	65	103	178	38	8	3	493
J	28	20	47	61	140	42	19	3	360
K	43	41	113	128	241	37	7	1	611
L	63	61	57	83	288	37	8	3	600
Total	535	647	627	1,138	2,657	255	162	63	6,084

[1] *Family Relations Act*

TABLE 12

Number of Children-in-Care, by Type of Care, as of March 31, 1991

Type of Care	Children-In-Care
Foster Home	2,772
Independent Living	285
Parents' Home	214
Free Home	237
Adoptive Home	250
Runaways	196
Subsidized Resource	2,019
Special Resource	111
Total	6,084

TABLE 13

Number of Children Discharged from Care of Superintendent of Family and Child Service, by Legal Status, 1990/91

Legal Status	Children Discharged
F&CS[1] Agreements	2,363
Before the Court, F&CS Act	1,178
Temporary Wards	879
Permanent Wards	597
FRA[2] Wards and Others	127
Adoption Act Wards	38
Other Jurisdiction Wards	44
Supervision Orders	747
Total	5,973

[1] *Family and Child Service Act*
[2] *Family Relations Act*

TABLE 14

Number of Children Discharged from Care of Superintendent of Family and Child Service, by Reason, 1990/91

Reason	Children Discharged
Reached Age of Majority	624
Married	2
Deceased	15
Adoption Completed	132
Repatriated	164
Requested Order Refused	88
Withdrawn from Court	233
Agreement Automatically Terminated	259
Guardianship Transferred	309
Returned to Other Jurisdiction	26
Intermittent Care Agreement Ended	49
Parent(s) Condition Improved	1,209
Family Situation Improved	1,254
Care Required by Child Completed	882
Termination of Supervision Order[1]	727
Total	5,973

[1] Children who are returned home under a Supervision Order are not discharged until the expiration of the Supervision Order.

TABLE 15

Foster Care and Child-in-Care Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$30,678,397
1989/90	28,530,161
1988/89	26,429,240
1987/88	25,771,255
1986/87	25,162,035

Residential Resources for Children-in-Care

Residential resources provide specialized substitute parenting for children with physical or behavioral problems when parents are unable to care for their child. They are available for children who are in the care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service either by permanent wardship, temporary wardship, special care agreement, short term custody agreement or intermittent care agreement.

Residential resources include foster homes, special care homes, group homes, specialized resources, and intensive child care resources. Statutory authority for the programs is in the *Family and Child Service Act* and the *GAIN Act*.

Foster Care

Foster homes provide substitute family care for children who are temporarily unable to live with their own families.

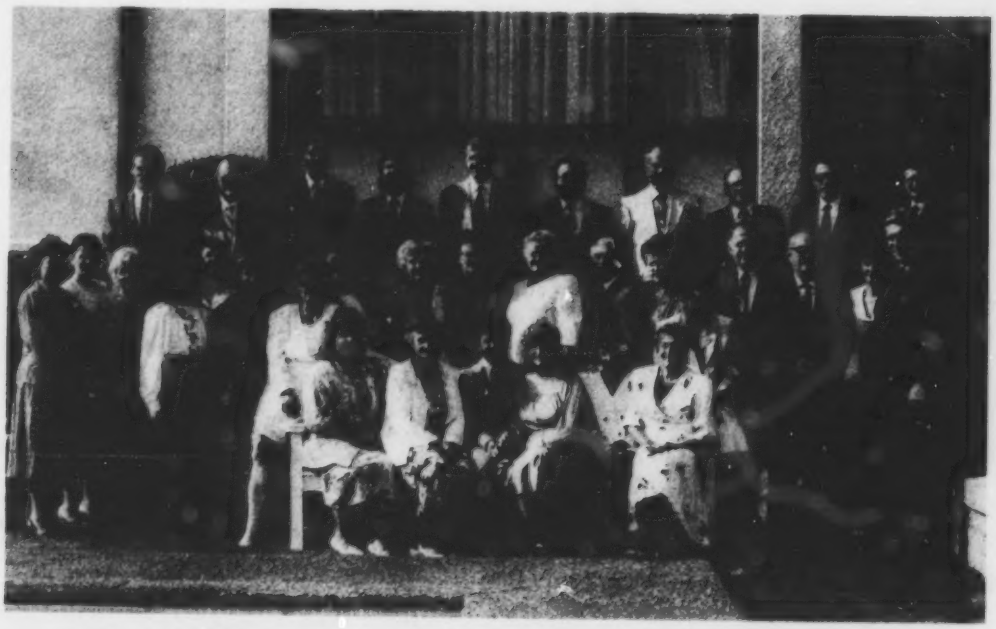
The ministry recruits and supports foster homes in all British Columbia communities for children-in-care up to age 19. Foster parents are carefully screened and approved by the ministry before children are placed with them. At fiscal year end, 46 per cent of all children in the care and custody of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service were being cared for in foster homes.

Foster parents receive a monthly maintenance and clothing allowance to cover basic expenses. These rates are supplemented when children have additional needs. Rates were increased five per cent on June 1, 1990.

TABLE 16
Foster Care Rates as of January 1, 1991

Age	Maintenance	Clothing	Total
	$	$	$
0–5 years	247.12	44.95	292.07
6–9 years	258.40	47.02	305.42
10–11 years	290.28	55.51	345.79
12–13 years	330.60	56.30	386.90
14–19 years	362.36	66.95	429.31

The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA) is an important partner in training and supporting foster parents. The ministry funds the federation and its 10 regional councils to provide training, administer two insurance programs for foster parents and operate the FOSTERLINE. FOSTERLINE is a source of information for active and prospective foster parents.



The first Lieutenant-Governor's Foster Families Awards were presented in June 1990. Ten families representing the values and commitment of British Columbia's foster families were selected from among 159 nominations. The award was established to recognize the hundreds of individuals and families who share their homes and lives with children who, for a variety of reasons, are not able to live with their natural parents.

Special Care Homes

Special care homes offer specialized care in a family setting for severely handicapped or disturbed children. Special care parents who have enhanced skills or education provide care for children who require greater assistance or commitment. The objective of special care homes is to assist children to achieve goals in their social, physical and emotional development in a home-like setting rather than in an institution. The ministry also uses special care homes as a respite service to assist families of severely handicapped or disturbed children.

With the exception of respite homes for handicapped children, special care homes are limited to one or two children or sibling groups. The ministry contracts with individual families for special care home service. These contracts have a fee for service component.

Over the past ten years, the ministry has substantially increased the number of special care homes because of the increase in the numbers of children-in-care with serious disabilities.

Group Homes

Twenty-four-hour skilled parenting and child care services are available in group homes for children with moderate emotional disturbances, or mental or physical handicaps.

The group homes are structured around a family model, and provide group and individual counselling and recreation, planned contact with the child's family, support services to natural parents (where appropriate), consultations with community agencies, and activities designed to integrate the child into the community. Three to eight children can be accommodated in each home. Some family group homes also provide receiving and assessment services.

A similar service is bed subsidy homes, which provide emergency accommodation for one to six children in a family setting.

Both group homes and bed subsidy homes are contracted services. They are either privately owned and operated, sponsored by a society or operated by a society.

Specialized Resources

Specialized residential resources offer 24-hour specialized treatment and care for children with severe mental or physical handicaps, or children with severe behavioral disturbances. Many of the children placed in these resources have difficulty functioning in the community.

These services include respite care, receiving and assessment, emergency receiving and residential group care.

Resource staff offer both individual and family counselling, as well as recreational, educational, cultural and employment-related programs.

Specialized resources are contracted services provided mainly by non-profit societies.

Intensive Child Care Resources (ICCR)

Some severely disturbed children require a range of services which call for a co-ordinated inter-ministry response.

The Ministry of Social Services and Housing provides the residential component of an inter-ministry response, supplementing services offered by the Ministries of Attorney General, Education, Health and Solicitor General.

Accommodation can be provided in a special care home or in a specialized group facility.

TABLE 17

Number of Child Care Resources, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Resource	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Respite[2]	—	—	124	70	48
Receiving, Assessment and Bed Subsidy Homes	45	98	123	99	91
Group Homes:					
Mentally or Physically Handicapped	11	10	9	10	8
Behaviorally or Emotionally Disturbed	111	104	93	96	88
Special Care Homes:					
Mentally or Physically Handicapped	334	338	241	220	223
Behaviorally or Emotionally Disturbed	500	489	301	287	232
Specialized Resources:					
Mentally or Physically Handicapped	31	34	34	29	29
Behaviorally or Emotionally Disturbed	201	178[1]	93	51	44
Non-Residential Resources[2]	—	—	86	79	45
Intensive Child Care Resources	24	25	21	26	19
Total	1,257	1,276	1,125	967	827

[1] Includes parent-counsellor homes which provide professional residential child care services in a family setting for one to two children.

[2] In 1989/90 Respite Services and Non-Residential Resources were transferred to Family Support Programs.

TABLE 18
Child Care Resources, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$75,931,066
1989/90	64,522,037[1]
1988/89	67,841,077
1987/88	62,813,501
1986/87	55,729,610

[1] In 1989/90 Respite Services and Non-Residential Resources were transferred to Family Support Programs.

Adoption Services

The objective of the ministry's adoption programs is to locate suitable, permanent homes for children whose parents are unable to care for them.

The programs operate under the authority of the *Adoption Act.* Ministry staff deliver a variety of services for children, adoptive parents, adult adoptees and birth parents choosing adoption. These include ministry adoptions, non-ministry adoptions, international adoptions and post-adoption services.

Ministry Adoptions

The ministry arranges permanent homes for children who are voluntarily placed for adoption and children who come into permanent care of the Superintendent of Family and Child Service.

The ministry's primary concern when arranging adoptions is the welfare of the child and careful consideration is given to finding the family that best meets the needs of the child.

When a family chooses to adopt, an assessment is carried out to determine suitability, and to determine what type of child would be best suited to the family. A central registry of approved families is maintained in Victoria. As children become available for adoption they are matched with approved families. Once approved, the family must be prepared to wait — as long as five or six years. Some families approved for adoption of a healthy infant may never be matched with a child because of the limited number available.

Sibling groups, older children with physical, mental or emotional handicaps and infants of parents who abused substances during pregnancy are often more difficult to place. Special needs children awaiting adoptive homes are featured in the ministry's bi-monthly Adoption Bulletin.

Non-Ministry Adoptions

Non-ministry adoptions are those in which the placement of a child is arranged privately, or with relatives. In all private adoptions, the court requires the Superintendent to submit a report on the circumstances of the placement and to make a recommendation regarding the granting of an adoption order. In adoptions by step-parents and relatives, the Superintendent becomes involved only when requested by the court. Informa-

tion for the Superintendent's report is obtained through a post-placement inquiry conducted by ministry staff.

International Adoptions

Due in part to the lengthy wait required to adopt a healthy infant and to the rising number of private adoptions, more and more couples are choosing to adopt a child from out-of-country. The ministry works with the National Adoption Desk of Health and Welfare Canada to find adoptive homes for children from other countries with whom they have agreements. International adoptions can also be privately arranged. The ministry has a limited role in adoptions completed out-of-country, but is involved in adoptions which are to be completed in the British Columbia Supreme Court. There is pre-placement involvement for immigration purposes and a post-placement inquiry in which the ministry is not involved.

Post-Adoption Services

Post-adoption services are provided to adoptees and adopting parents after an adoption has been legalized. Upon request ministry staff provide adoptees who wish to learn more about their background with non-identifying medical and background information. Birth parents may also receive information about the family who adopted their child and an early report about the child's progress.

Assisted Adoption Program

In March 1990, the ministry introduced the Assisted Adoption program which provides financial assistance to families who otherwise would not be able to adopt children who have, or who may develop, a physical, mental or emotional disability. Adoption assistance may include maintenance payments or payments for the services directly related to the special needs of the child, until the child reaches the age of 19.

TABLE 19

Number of Children Placed for Adoption by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing 1986/87 to 1990/91

Category	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Children placed from:					
—Within B.C.					
—in B.C.	179	185	209	307	381
—to other provinces	—	—	4	9	4
—to other countries	—	—	—	—	1
—Other Provinces into B.C.	7	7	8	1	2
—Other Countries into B.C.	7	15	49	35	35
Total Children Placed	193	207	270	352	423

TABLE 20

Number of Adoption Placements Made by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, by Type of Placement, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Type of Placement	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Hospital to Adoption Home	58	64	51	72	75
Foster Home to Adoption Home	94	95	123	182	239
Foster Home Changed to Adoption Home	34	33	47	63	73
International	7	15	49	35	36
Total	193	207	270	352	423

TABLE 21

Number of Children Placed for Adoption by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, by Category, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Category	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Healthy Infants	80	92	122	150	183
Children With Special Needs	113	115	148	202	240
Total	193	207	270	352	423

TABLE 22

Number of Children Placed for Adoption by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing, by Age, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Age	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
0 to 23 months	101	116	146	182	217
2 to 5 years	52	43	61	86	117
6 to 12 years	34	38	41	67	76
13 years and older	6	10	22	17	13
Total	193	207	270	352	423

TABLE 23

Adoption Reports Submitted to the Supreme Court, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Numbers
1990/91	175
1989/90	159
1988/89	109
1987/88	161
1986/87	124

TABLE 24

Approved Adoption Homes, by Type of Child Requested, as of March 31, 1987 to 1991

Category	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Healthy infants	10	18	27	36	59
Healthy infants or children with special needs	203	244	298	319	308
Children with special needs	25	56	64	81	85
Total	238	318	389	436	452

SECTION 6

Community Support Services

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

Highlights of 1990/91

- In June 1990 the Personal Service Planning Process was introduced for adults with mental handicaps. The process is designed to ensure that a plan of action, addressing current as well as future service requirements, is established for all adults with mental handicaps who receive ministry services. The planning team, chaired by ministry social workers, may include representatives from other ministries, service providers, advocates or family members.

- In October 1990 the *Standards for Residential Services for Persons with Mental Handicaps* were released. These standards were developed through a collaborative effort between the ministry and the Provincial Advisory Committee on Services to People with Mental Handicaps. The standards provide a framework for ensuring a consistent quality of community residential care.

- The Provincial Advisory Committee on Services to People with Mental Handicaps continued to assist the ministry to develop and enhance its services in this area. In 1990/91 a major consultation process was initiated regarding the plans outlined in the document *Planning for the Future: A Proposal for Services for People with Mental Handicaps*. This document described the existing range of community services and proposals for future services for adults with mental handicaps. The Provincial Advisory Committee was responsible for reviewing the responses received during the consultation process and making recommendations to government on the best plan for the future.

- In July 1990 the government appointed, through the Ministry of Government Management Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Programs, a Task Force on Child Care. Its mandate was to recommend ways to increase the number of affordable, accessible, quality child care spaces in British Columbia. Staff from the Ministry of Social Services and Housing were involved as observers to the task force, providing program and policy information and interpretation. The task force report was presented to Cabinet in March 1991.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

The programs offered through Community Support Services Division are intended to assist individuals and families to maximize their potential and become as independent as possible. During 1990/91 the Division's name was changed from Rehabilitation and Support to Community Support to better reflect the nature of the services provided through its programs. The programs are provided under the authority of the *Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) Act.*

Programs are offered in the areas of Day Care, Support to Children with Special Needs, Services for People with Mental Handicaps, Community Projects and Services to Seniors (*see* Section 9: Services to Seniors).

Day Care

The ministry's regular day care programs are designed to assist eligible families with their day care costs, maintain or create spaces through the provision of grants, and improve the availability and quality of family day care homes through support services like caregiver recruitment and training.

Day Care Subsidies

Eligible families of children up to and including age 12 may receive assistance with the cost of day care in both licensed and unlicensed family day care, group day care, in-own-home day care, nursery school and out-of-school day care facilities.

Eligibility is based on both financial and social criteria established by the GAIN Regulations and the Canada Assistance Plan. Most of the parents receiving this assistance are working or attending school.

Expenditures for 1990/91 totalled $47,697,284.

Day Care Grants

The objective of the Day Care Grants program is to assist nonprofit societies with essential costs associated with maintaining or creating day care spaces.

Start-Up Grants, providing matching funds of up to $10,000, are available to assist with the cost of equipment, furnishings and minor renovations associated with opening or expanding a day care centre.

Expenditures for Start-Up Grants in 1990/91 totalled $186,737. The program assisted in the creation of 638 day care spaces.

Emergency Repair and Relocation Grants to a maximum of $5,000 are available to assist with the cost of maintaining day care spaces. The ministry helped to preserve 1,705 day care spaces by providing a total of $254,342 in Emergency Repair and Relocation Grants.

Day Care Support

The objectives of the Day Care Support program are to increase the availability of family day care arrangements, and to assist subsidized parents in selecting these arrangements. The ministry contracts with

nonprofit societies to provide the day care support services of caregiver recruitment, training and support, and assistance to subsidized parents.

The expansion of the Day Care Support program during 1990/91 took place as a result of the significant allocation to this program in December 1989. Over one million dollars was allocated as part of the day care initiatives introduced in 1989. There are now 27 programs funded by the ministry, providing day care support services in major communities throughout the province. Two of these programs assist with the coordination of day care services on the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University campuses.

Expenditures for 1990/91 totalled $1,615,733.

TABLE 25

Average Monthly Number of Children Subsidized, and Annual Expenditures, 1990/91

Type of Care	Average No. Children/Month Half Days	Average No. Children/Month Full Days	Average No. Children/Month Total	Annual Expenditure
Family	656	5,905	6,561	$20,598,778
Group	140	3,356	3,496	14,235,823
In Own Home	659	2,338	2,997	6,491,293
Out/School	1,485	1,743	3,228	5,837,521
Nursery	580	—	580	533,869
Total	3,520	13,342	16,862	47,697,284

Support to Children with Special Needs

Special Needs Day Care, Infant Development Programs and the At Home Respite Program offer support to children with special needs and to their families.

Special Needs Day Care

The objective of Special Needs Day Care is to help children with special needs to participate in day care programs by providing extra supports which address the specific needs of each child.

The program offers specialized care, activities, and supervision all designed to help children with special needs to realize their social, emotional, physical and intellectual potential, and to assist their parents to achieve or maintain independence.

The ministry contracted with agencies to provide 157 programs offering 1,880 full- and part-time day care spaces for children with special needs in both specialized and integrated centres. In addition, the ministry funded an average of 458 special needs children in non-contracted spaces in family day care homes, group day care centres and nursery schools for each month in 1990/91.

Parents of children with special needs are not income-tested for specialized day care services. In 1990/91, a total of $14,270,275 was spent in the Special Needs Day Care program. Of this total, $11,194,888 was spent on contracted specialized day care spaces and $3,075,387 was spent for children with special needs in non-contracted spaces in family day care homes, group day care centres and nursery schools.

Recent figures indicate a move towards integration of special needs children. Operators of regular day care centres are being encouraged to take special needs children into their facilities, and specialized centres are accepting typical children into their programs, as well as offering outreach services for children with special needs in community spaces. During 1990/91 the ministry initiated a review of the Special Needs Day Care program to ensure that its services continue to meet the needs of families.

Infant Development

Home-based services by professionally trained infant development consultants is available for parents of infants who display significant developmental delays as a result of mental or physical handicaps.

The objective of the Infant Development Program is to help parents develop positive and realistic expectations of their child's abilities, and to teach the parents how to encourage and support their child's development.

The Mitchell Assessment, an evaluation tool developed in New Zealand, has been used since 1988/89 to evaluate 12 infant development programs. Evaluations are carried out at the request of the individual sponsoring societies and provide useful information to program staff, allowing them to improve services and better meet objectives.

The ministry funded 41 Infant Development Programs in 1990/91. While it is difficult to estimate the number of children who participated in the program, services were provided to as many as 1,660 at any given time.

Expenditures totalled $3,156,250.

At Home Respite Program

The At Home Respite Program provides financial assistance to families caring for children with severe disabilities to allow them to purchase respite services that meet their needs. It is an income-tested program providing up to $2,800 a year per family. Respite is short-term care provided in or out of the family home by a caregiver chosen by the family. The At Home Respite Program is one component of the At Home Program, which is administered jointly by the Health Services Division of this ministry and the Ministry of Health.

The At Home Program began in October 1989 and was implemented during the 1990/91 fiscal yar. As of March 31, 1991, 1,092 children had been deemed eligible for respite benefits, and expenditures for respite totalled $1,263,078.

Services for People with Mental Handicaps

Services for People with Mental Handicaps are offered under the authority of the *GAIN Act* (section 2) and the GAIN Regulations (section 15).

Designed with the objective of assisting individuals or families to become as independent as possible, the programs include: Community Residential Services, Woodlands, Training and Support Programs and Professional Support Services.

Community Residential Services

The Community Residential Services program assists adults with mental handicaps to live in the community, and fosters as much independence as possible while ensuring the individuals' needs are being met. Services range from full personal care to counselling and support for independent living.

There are four program models: the Semi-Independent Living Program, Intensive Adult Care Services, Respite Care and the Community Residences Program.

Semi-Independent Living Program

In-home support is provided for adults with mental handicaps to allow them to live in their own communities. The level of support varies according to the needs of the individual.

Intensive Adult Care Services

Short-term, intensive community-based care is available for individuals who have challenging behaviors. This assistance is often provided in response to an emergency in the client's original residential placement. Assistance may also be required to assist a client's transition into the community, and may include emergency respite services and behavior management. The program's design allows a client to remain in the community while receiving specialized care that is not routinely available in their place of residence.

Respite Care

Emergency and short-term respite care is provided for the family or care provider of adults with mental handicaps.

Community Residences Program

The ministry contracts the services of nonprofit societies, individuals, partnerships and limited companies to provide community residences for adults with mental handicaps.

The residences vary in size from small family care homes to larger residential facilities. Homes for three or more residents must be licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act* and *Adult Care Regulations.*

The contractors are responsible for ensuring the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing are met; personal care, supervision, recreation and transportation are available; assessments are carried out; skills training and behavior management are provided; and residents have access to the community. During 1990/91 a three-year ministry initiative to increase staff wages in contracted nonprofit residential resources got underway; $7.77 million was allocated in this fiscal year towards this initiative.

In 1990/91, 3,475 clients were served through these programs. Expenditures totalled $89,285,664 including capital grants and start-up funds.

TABLE 26

Number of Community Residences[1] for People with Mental Handicaps, and Residential Spaces, by Region, 1990/91

Region	Residences	Spaces
A	127	411
B	43	124
C	188	471
D	135	517
F	133	432
G	112	424
H	36	166
J	49	134
K	204	414
L	162	382
Total	1,189	3,475

[1] Residences include nonprofit group homes, licensed proprietary boarding homes, one- and two-bed unlicensed homes, semi-independent living homes, respite homes and intensive adult care resources.

Woodlands

Woodlands, which has served as a residential and training centre for people with mental handicaps since before the turn of the century, continued to place residents in the community through the 1990/91 fiscal year.

In 1990/91 Project 90 was completed and Project 91 commenced. Project 90 saw the relocation of 70 Woodlands residents into new community homes by the end of November 1990. Two wards at Woodlands were closed. Staffing reductions were achieved through attrition.

Project 91 required community placement planning for an additional 52 residents from Woodlands.

Before residents leave Woodlands an intensive 15- to 18-month planning process takes place, involving the residents, their families, Woodlands staff, ministry staff and caregivers.

TABLE 27

Woodlands, Population Totals and Annual Expenditures, as of March 31, 1987 to 1991

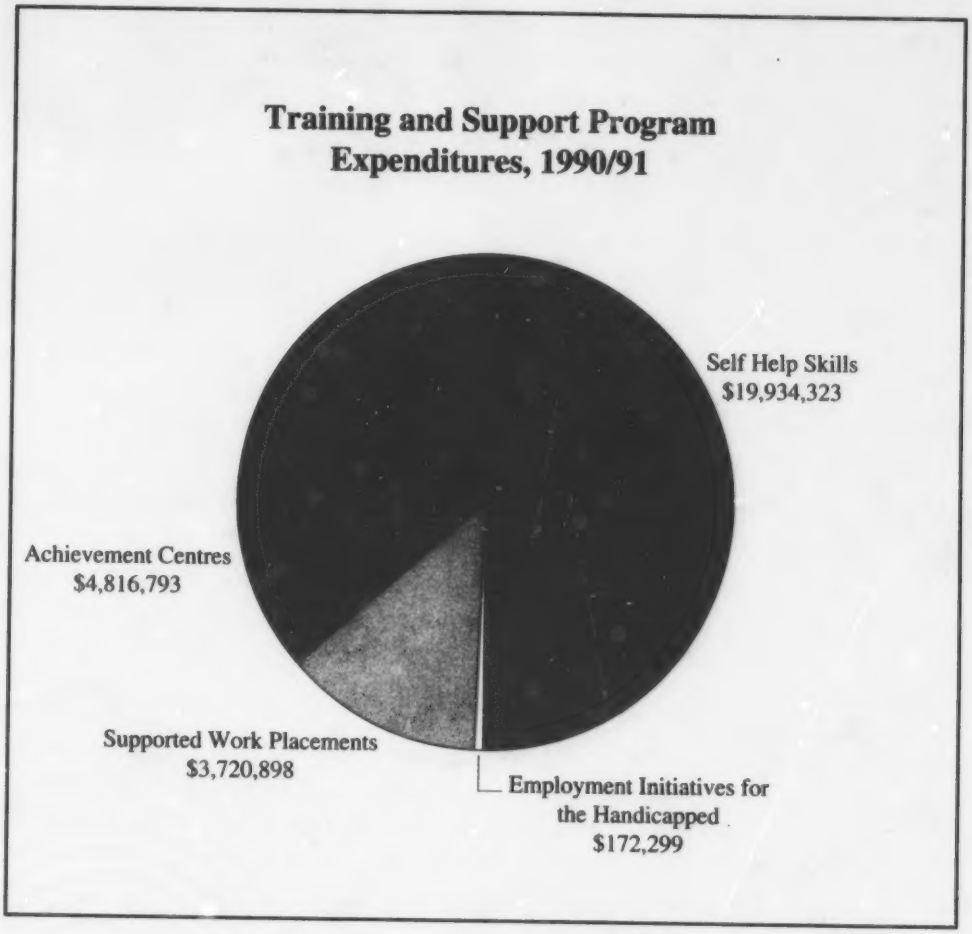
Year	Residents	Expenditures[1]
1991	292	$34,701,363
1990	350	38,461,346
1989	488	41,609,495
1988	528	47,261,900
1987	604	46,104,862

[1] Expenditure figures have been adjusted from those reported in previous annual reports to more accurately reflect Woodlands' total cost. The figures reported for all years now include building occupancy and employee benefit costs charged to Woodlands.

During the 1990/91 fiscal year, Woodlands continued to serve as a support service for the community. Twenty-five individuals were admitted, primarily for short-term assessment and treatment, and 99 people were assessed on an outpatient basis. Woodlands' role as a back-up specialized support for the community during the deinstitutionalization process has been viewed as a vital link in the success of the program.

Training and Support Programs

Training and Support programs for adults with mental handicaps include Employment Initiatives for the Handicapped, Self-Help Skills, Achievement Centres and Supported Work Placements.



Employment Initiatives for the Handicapped

The Employment Initiatives for the Handicapped program enables recipients of Handicapped Benefits to work at community worksites. The program is offered under the *GAIN Act* (section 2) and GAIN Regulations (section 15.1).

Through work experience individuals not only upgrade their work skills, they also gain valuable social contacts. Single people may receive up to $50 per month and couples may receive up to $100 to cover program-related expenses. Participation in the program must not exceed 12 months in a 36 month period.

In 1990/91, 743 people participated, at a cost of $172,299.

TABLE 28

Employment Initiatives for the Handicapped, Annual Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$172,299
1989/90	180,908
1988/89	197,075
1987/88	166,086
1986/87	189,358

Self-Help Skills

The Self-Help Skills program provides a range of personal care, social integration and pre-vocational training for people with mental handicaps. The program is offered under the *GAIN Act* (section 2).

The objective is to assist individuals with mental handicaps to live in the community with as much independence as possible. This objective is met through individually focussed services purchased on contract from nonprofit societies, private companies or individuals and community colleges. Although assistance varies according to the needs of the client, all programs are designed to train and support adults with mental handicaps as they develop their personal and social skills. Individuals may receive one-to-one or group assistance and are encouraged to progress towards more demanding or challenging activities as they are able.

The program served approximately 2,500 clients in 1990/91. Total expenditures were $19,934,323.

TABLE 29

Self-Help Skills Program, Expenditures, Hours and Clients Served, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures	Hours of Service	Clients Served
1990/91	,934,323	—	2,500
1989/90	13,961,642	—	2,142
1988/89	10,045,136	—	1,736
1987/88	6,882,532	809,710	2,000
1986/87	5,020,522	661,000	1,500

Achievement Centres

The Achievement Centres program is offered through authority of the *GAIN Act* (section 2) and GAIN Regulations (section 18). Its objectives are to improve the personal, social or work-related skills of adults with mental handicaps.

Achievement centres are allocated an approved number of participant hours, and are paid a subsidy based on the number of approved hours. In 1990/91 the subsidy was $1.32 per participant hour.

A transportation allowance is also available to eligible clients, to offset the cost of attending achievement centres.

In 1990/91, $4,816,793 was spent through this program on operating subsidies and an additional $1,034,762 on capital grants and transportation allowances.

Supported Work Placements

Supported Work Placements provide a combination of work experience and training and support for adults with mental handicaps.

The program is offered under the authority of the *GAIN Act* (section 2). Its objective is to assist adults with mental handicaps who are job-ready, who require minimal support and who will be able to work without additional support within 36 months, become integrated into the work force.

Services go beyond those extended in achievement centres and the Self-Help Skills program. Targeted to the individual, the employer or the community, services may include job training, monitoring and marketing. Clients may receive one-to-one or group assistance in a number of different work settings.

In 1990/91, 664 clients took part in the program. Expenditures totalled $3,720,898.

Professional Support Services

The objective of the Professional Support Services program is to assist in the provision of effective programs for adults with mental handicaps living in the community. The program assisted contracted service providers, parents and field staff to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and services related to community living. Professional Support Services also provide caregiver training opportunities.

The program is offered under the *GAIN Act* (section 2).

Services may be purchased on contract from individuals, nonprofit societies, private businesses or community colleges.

Program expenditures for 1990/91 totalled $3,555,222.

Community Projects Funding

The Community Projects Funding Program provides funding for non-profit societies to assist them in offering community-based services to persons in need or who are likely to be in need.

The services eligible for funding through the program include those which complement and support services offered under statute by the ministry. They include family service projects, crisis centres, youth projects, services to low-income groups, services to people with handicaps and volunteer bureaus.

In 1990/91 a total of 160 community projects were funded through the program, at a cost of $6,323,893. This total reflects the $750,000 allocated to this program area in 1990/91 to enhance existing projects as well as create several new ones.

Community Projects

Family Service Projects: Assist families through counselling, programs on parenting, and support and training to self-help groups.

Crisis Centres: Provide information, counselling and crisis intervention services by trained volunteers.

Youth Projects: Provide activities for young people to enable them to participate in their communities in a positive and responsible way. Programs vary according to the needs of the youths served.

Low Income Groups: Help low income families and individuals in their communities. Services include information exchanges, organizational assistance for self-help groups, counselling and practical assistance in such areas as accommodation and moving, money management and effective use of community resources.

Services to People with Handicaps: Provide services to people with disabilities in a variety of programs.

Volunteer Services: Funding is available to volunteer bureaus to assist in coordinating the efforts of local volunteers.

Senior Citizen Counsellors Program

Senior Citizen Counsellors are seniors located in communities throughout British Columbia who volunteer their time and energy to help their peers.

The counsellors come from all walks of life, and draw on their experiences to assist their fellow seniors in a variety of ways. They offer information about the services and programs available in the community, provide emotional support and counselling, and perform other services as needed to enhance the independence and well-being of seniors in their communities.

Counsellors are appointed by the ministry for their abilities, and their interest in and involvement with their peers. Provincial conferences are held every two years, and local workshops are put on as required to keep the counsellors up-to-date on the kinds of services available to seniors in British Columbia.

The counsellors submit monthly activity reports and may claim reimbursements for expenses of up to $125 per month.

As of March 1991 there were 170 counsellors. Expenditures for the program in the 1990/91 fiscal year were $218,923.

TABLE 30

Senior Citizen Counsellors, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$218,923
1989/90	260,596
1988/89	241,563
1987/88	204,679
1936/87	196,100

SECTION 7

Programs for Independence

PROGRAMS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Highlights of 1990/91

- In 1990/91 total caseloads increased 14.9 per cent. At March 31, 1991 the basic caseload (including the 60-to-64 age group and Child in Home of Relative cases) was 125,671, up 18,363 from March 31, 1990.
- Rate increases in 1990/91 include:
  (1) Income assistance rates (support allowance increased 2.8 per cent, shelter cost increases varied between 4.7 and 6.1 per cent depending on family size).
  (2) Comforts allowance increased from $60 to $70.
  (3) School start-up allowance increased from $31 to $35 for children aged six to 11, and from $47 to $50 for children aged 12 and over.
  (4) Funeral service fees were increased by 5 per cent.
- Revenue Canada required the Province to provide T5007 tax slips for ministry clients for the 1990 income tax year. Accordingly, a T5007 project office opened in mid-January 1991 to produce slips and to offer clients a central location for information. The number of inquiries received during the three-month project was 8,903.
- The ministry established three new emergency shelters and added beds in others, thereby increasing the capacity of shelters, transition houses and SAFE homes by 74 beds.

INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMS FOR INDEPENDENCE

Programs for Independence provide a basic income for British Columbians in need and assistance in helping them to become independent and self-supporting. These services are delivered under the statutory authority of the *Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) Act.*

Assistance is provided in the areas of income assistance (Temporary Assistance or Income Assurance); Health Services; the Family Maintenance Program; the Opportunities to Independence Programs; and the Ministry Investigators Program.

The programs are administered through the ministry's district offices. Eligibility for benefits is based on an objective measurement of the applicant's needs and financial circumstances. If an applicant is not satisfied with the evaluation, an appeal can be made. Appeal kits are available to assist with the appeal process.

In the 1990/91 fiscal year 1,609 appeals were submitted, a reduction of 9.8 per cent from the previous year. These included 1,415 administrative reviews and 194 tribunals.

TABLE 31

Appeals, April 1990 to March 1991

Number of Administrative Reviews	1,415
Number of Tribunals	194
Total Number of Appeals	1,609
Number of Administrative Reviews in Favor of Ministry	993
Number of Administrative Reviews in Favor of Appellant	422
Number of Tribunal Decisions in Favor of Ministry	58
Number of Tribunal Decisions in Favor of Appellant	136

TABLE 32

Number of Appeals, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Number of Appeals
1990/91	1,609
1989/90	1,499
1988/89	1,183
1987/88	1,541
1986/87	1,512

TABLE 33

Programs for Independence, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$811,538,090
1989/90	766,804,328
1988/89	816,493,923
1987/88	815,957,984
1986/87	821,231,476

Income Assistance

Income assistance is offered through two types of programs: Temporary Assistance and Income Assurance.

Temporary Assistance

Temporary Assistance helps eligible recipients to meet the cost of fundamental living expenses. It consists of a monthly shelter allowance determined by the family's actual shelter and utility costs (up to a maximum), and a monthly support allowance. Assistance is available for low income families in need of supplementary income, as well as family situations where one or more recipients is aged 60 or over, and children living in the home of relatives (CIHR), where the relatives receive assistance on behalf of the child.

Benefit levels are based on family size.

Temporary Assistance is intended as financial help in a time of need. Ministry policies encourage and assist employable clients to seek independence and self-sufficiency. Monthly benefits are available to eligible people aged 18 to 64 years, and to their dependents.

Support and shelter benefits were increased in August 1990. Income assistance rates are calculated according to a variable shelter component and a fixed support allowance. The support allowance increased 2.8 per cent while the maximum shelter component reflected the reality of increased shelter costs. Shelter cost increases varied between 4.7 and 6.1 per cent depending on family size.

TABLE 34

Temporary Assistance Rates[1] as of March 1991

Family Size	Employable	Unemployable
Single	$ 500	$ 550
2 persons	837	887
3 persons	983	1,033
4 persons	1,094	1,144
5 persons	1,215	1,265
6 persons	1,311	1,361
7 persons	1,407	1,457
8 persons	1,498	1,548
9 persons	1,589	1,639
10 persons	1,689	1,730
11 or more	add up to $91 for each additional person	

[1] The amount of the shelter allowance depends upon actual shelter costs paid by recipients, up to a maximum for the family unit. These rates reflect the maximum amount available to recipients in each category.

TABLE 35

Temporary Assistance, Monthly Case Activity, 1990/91

Month	Cases Closed[1]	Cases Opened[2]	Increase/ Decrease	Total Cases
April 1990	12,740	10,627	−2,113	98,082
May 1990	12,269	12,432	+ 163	98,136
June 1990	12,283	13,808	+1,525	99,477
July 1990	13,602	12,505	−1,097	98,283
August 1990	12,877	14,255	+1,378	99,488
September 1990	13,571	12,522	−1,049	98,280
October 1990	13,089	14,443	+1,354	99,479
November 1990	11,679	16,332	+4,653	104,001
December 1990	11,208	17,913	+6,705	110,556
January 1991	11,762	17,764	+6,002	116,410
February 1991	13,851	16,022	+2,171	118,398
March 1991	14,301	14,559	+ 258	118,375

[1] Cases Closed: Estimates of the number of clients who did not receive income assistance in the current month but who did receive assistance in the previous month.

[2] Cases Opened: Estimates of the number of clients who received income assistance in the current month but not in the previous month.

TABLE 36

Average Monthly Caseload and Number of Persons Receiving Basic Temporary Assistance, by Category, 1990/91

Category	Number of Cases
Heads of Family	45,500 cases
Single Persons	59,414 cases
Total	104,914 cases
Dependents	86,839 persons
Average Monthly Total	191,753 persons

TABLE 37

Average Number of Persons Receiving Temporary Assistance Per Month (Including Dependents), 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Persons
1990/91	199,963
1989/90	193,449
1988/89	209,576
1987/88	215,830
1986/87	224,515

TABLE 38
Number of Cases of Temporary Assistance, by Category and Region, March 1991

Region	Single Men	Single Women	One-Parent	Two-Parent	Couples	Child With Relatives	Total Cases	Dependent Children	Dependent Spouses	Total Recipients
A	7,991	3,687	4,106	1,163	446	298	17,691	9,293	1,609	28,593
B	11,834	3,895	2,746	770	535	218	19,998	5,831	1,305	27,134
C	5,905	2,813	4,324	1,063	444	240	14,790	9,325	1,507	25,622
D	5,878	2,885	5,873	1,577	580	362	17,155	13,264	2,157	32,576
F	3,105	1,744	3,442	1,011	455	219	9,976	8,036	1,465	19,477
G	2,833	1,495	3,080	888	390	259	8,945	7,206	1,278	17,429
H	2,750	1,326	2,785	760	345	323	8,289	6,585	1,105	15,979
J	1,845	783	1,763	498	192	264	5,345	4,194	690	10,229
K	4,005	2,014	3,943	1,099	473	292	11,826	9,157	1,572	22,555
L	4,376	2,081	3,627	886	342	258	11,570	7,723	1,228	20,521
Q	38	14	23	8	3	1	87	66	11	164
Total	50,560	22,737	35,712	9,723	4,205	2,734	125,672	80,680	13,927	220,279

Income Assurance

Income Assurance provides assistance for people with handicaps, seniors who don't receive Old Age Security, and Mixed Families with Old Age Security Component.

As of March 31, 1991, there were 18,855 people receiving Income Assurance. Of these, 100 recipients and their dependents were involved in more than one plan.

Handicapped Benefits

Handicapped Benefits are paid to applicants between the ages of 18 and 64 who meet the medical and social definition of a handicapped person as defined in the *GAIN Regulations*. The condition must be permanent and debilitating, and opportunities for employment training must be exhausted. In addition, the applicant must require either extensive assistance or supervision, or face unusual ongoing costs as a result of their medical condition.

In recognition of added expenses faced by people with handicaps, Handicapped Benefits are higher than those provided under basic temporary assistance. As well, medical, dental and pharmacy services are provided, and a yearly bus pass is available for a nominal fee ($39 in 1990/91).

In order to receive Handicapped Benefits, an individual must be designated as handicapped through a medical assessment completed by a doctor, and a social assessment completed by a ministry social worker. The assessments are reviewed by the ministry's Health Services Division in Victoria. Once an individual has been designated "handicapped" the status is permanent.

Benefits will be suspended if the client becomes financially independent, however, medical benefits will continue to be supplied if the individual achieves independence through employment.

As of March 1991 there were 17,768 recipients receiving monthly benefits.

Seniors (not receiving Old Age Security)

This plan provides benefits to families where at least one individual is over 65 years of age and does not qualify for federal Old Age Security benefits. In March 1991, there were 1,697 recipients.

Mixed Families with Old Age Security Component

This plan covers families that qualify for Income Assurance, and have at least one member over 65 years of age receiving Old Age Security benefits. In March 1991, there were 283 recipients.

TABLE 39

Number of Persons Receiving Income Assurance, by Family Type, as of March 31, 1991

	RECIPIENTS				
Family Type	Handicapped Benefits	Age 65+ (Not Receiving OAS)	Families With an OAS Component	Total Number of Recipients	Total Number of Cases
Single Men	8,041	161	—	8,202	8,202
Single Women	6,622	588	—	7,210	7,210
Couples	1,789	900	224	2,913	2,079
Two-Parent	606	37	41	684	625
One-Parent	710	11	18	739	739
Total	17,768	1,697	283	19,748	18,655

TABLE 40

Number of Persons Receiving Handicapped Benefits, March 1987 to 1991

Year	Number of Persons
1990/91	17,768
1989/90	17,152
1988/89	16,444
1987/88	16,495
1986/87	16,192

TABLE 41
Total Programs for Independence Caseload, by Family Type and Dependent Children, March 1991

	Single Men	Single Women	Couples	Two-Parent	One-Parent	Total Cases	Total Dependent Children
Temporary Assistance							
CIHR	1,434	1,300	—	—	—	2,734	—
Age 60–64	1,833	1,757	731	169	72	4,562	393
Basic	48,727	20,980	3,475	9,553	35,640	118,375	80,289
Total	51,994	24,037	4,206	9,722	35,712	125,671	80,682
Income Assurance							
Handicapped Benefits	8,041	6,622	1,325	553	710	17,251	1,979
Age 65+ (not receiving OAS)	161	588	528	31	11	1,319	56
Families with an OAS Component	—	—	130	37	18	185	87
Mixed Plans[1]	—	—	96	4	—	100	6
Total	8,202	7,210	2,079	625	739	18,855	2,128
Total PFI Cases	60,196	31,247	6,285	10,347	36,451	144,526	82,810

[1] Mixed Plans include families containing two different plans;
Handicapped Benefits and Age 65+ (Not receiving OAS): 3 cases
Handicapped Benefits and Families with an OAS component: 71 cases
Age 65+ (Not receiving OAS) and Families with an OAS component: 26 cases
Mixed Plans Total: 100 cases.

TABLE 42

Total Programs for Independence Caseload and Number of Recipients, by Region, for March 1991

Region	Temporary Assistance		Income Assurance		Total PFI	
	Cases	Recipients	Cases	Recipients	Cases	Recipients
A	17,706	28,626	3,096	3,812	20,802	32,438
B	20,020	27,165	3,511	4,049	23,531	31,214
C	14,826	25,691	2,303	2,844	17,129	28,535
D	17,161	32,597	2,312	3,008	19,473	35,605
F	9,977	19,480	1,761	2,272	11,738	21,752
G	8,948	17,433	1,351	1,805	10,299	19,238
H	8,289	15,979	803	1,119	9,092	17,098
J	5,347	10,231	501	676	5,848	10,907
K	11,826	22,555	1,242	1,624	13,068	24,179
L	11,571	20,522	1,975	2,478	13,546	23,000
Total	125,671	220,279	18,855	23,687	144,526	243,966

TABLE 43

Employability Status of PFI Clients, by Region, for March 1991

Region	Employable	Unemployable
A	13,150	4,556
B	13,798	6,222
C	10,579	4,247
D	12,798	4,363
F	7,573	2,404
G	6,649	2,299
H	6,335	1,954
J	4,074	1,173
K	9,189	2,637
L	8,025	3,546
Total	92,170	33,401

Other Services and Benefits

Recipients may qualify for a number of other benefits under the provisions of GAIN legislation in the form of allowances, discretionary grants and residential resources.

Allowances and Grants

When a recipient is without assets, income or other resources to meet an emergency, the ministry may provide additional assistance in the form of a Crisis Grant. Expenditures for Crisis Grants in 1990/91 were $6,645,329.

TABLE 44

Crisis Grants, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$6,645,329
1989/90	4,963,[illegible]5
1988/89	3,945,164
1987/88	4,217,885
1986/87	3,530,465

An annual School Start-up Allowance is issued to families with dependent school children to help with the cost of starting the school year. In 1990/91, $35 was provided for children aged 6 to 11, and $50 was allotted for children 12 and over. Expenditures totalled $1,919,846. This rate was increased in August 1990.

TABLE 45

School Start-Up Allowance, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$1,919,846
1989/90	1,518,392
1988/89	1,683,568
1987/88	1,736,394
1986/87	1,726,108

Camp Fees are available for children of eligible income assistance recipients and children with mental or physical disabilities. Fees may also be provided for handicapped adults or children in residential care or who are receiving Handicapped Benefits to enable them to attend specialized camps. In 1990/91, $479,643 was provided.

TABLE 46

Camp Fees, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$479,643
1989/90	450,897
1988/89	444,034
1987/88	436,994
1986/87	364,857

An annual Christmas Supplementary Allowance is issued to eligible income assistance recipients. In 1990/91, $28 was provided for single clients, and $70 was provided for clients with one or more dependents. Total expenditures were $5,149,829.

TABLE 47

Christmas Supplementary Allowance, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$5,149,829
1989/90	5,006,326
1988/89	5,494,027
1987/88	5,699,877
1986/87[1]	5,989,020

[1] Includes an increase in the Christmas Allowance.

A Diet Allowance may be provided, to a maximum of $20 per month, to a recipient who must meet extraordinary dietary requirements. In 1990/91, $1,458,453 was distributed through this allowance.

TABLE 48

Diet Allowance, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$1,458,453
1989/90	1,514,844
1988/89	1,622,575
1987/88	1,691,463
1986/87	1,635,810

A Natal Allowance of up to $25 per month may be granted to a recipient who is pregnant or who has a child of less than seven months of age. In the case of a multiple pregnancy or birth, the allowance may be increased to up to $40 per month. In 1990/91, expenditures were $1,153,158.

TABLE 49

Natal Allowance, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$1,153,158
1989/90	1,156,751
1988/89	1,216,956
1987/88	1,209,750
1986/87	1,205,655

A Comforts Allowance (up to $70 monthly) is allotted to help meet the personal and recreational expenses of eligible persons (with assets of less than $500) who reside in a subsidized care or personal care facility, provided the facility's operating budget does not cover these costs. In 1990/91 an average of 4,407 clients received benefits each month, for a total expenditure of $4,060,582.

TABLE 50

Comforts Allowance, Expenditures and Number of Recipients, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Recipients[1]	Expenditures
1990/91	4,407	$4,060,582
1989/90	4,224	3,581,987
1988/89	3,772	3,350,848
1987/88	3,968	2,089,357
1986/87	3,671	2,832,167

[1] These figures do not include recipients paid through an institutional budget.

When a deceased person has no estate, relatives or other persons able to assume responsibility, the ministry will pay burial or cremation costs. In 1990/91 the ministry assisted with 663 funerals, for a total of $1,073,338. Funeral services fees were increased in November 1990.

TABLE 51

Burial of Indigents, Expenditures and Number of Burials, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Number	Expenditures
1990/91	663	$1,073,338
1989/90	590	1,013,785
1988/89	593	870,109
1987/88	596	815,765
1986/87	568	720,187

In special circumstances, where such a move would improve opportunities for employment, the ministry will provide a Repatriation Grant to assist clients to relocate to their home province or country. In 1990/91 the ministry provided $66,631 in Repatriation Grants.

TABLE 52
Repatriation Grants, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$66,631
1989/90	59,420
1988/89	73,884
1987/88	90,754
1986/87	88,433

A monthly Guide Dog Allowance of $35 may be provided to assist a client in maintaining a registered guide dog. Benefits allotted under this plan are included in the total Programs For Independence expenditures for 1990/91.

Adult Residential Resources

Adult residential resources and related programs include transition houses and emergency shelters, hostels for transient persons, user fees for long-term care facilities and shared alcohol and drug programs.

Transition Houses and Emergency Shelters

The ministry provides funding for registered nonprofit societies to develop and operate emergency shelters and transition houses for people in need. Emergency shelters and transition houses offer room and board in a safe and supportive environment for women and children in a crisis situation. Expenditures in 1990/91 were $7,525,039, a significant increase in budget and capacity. The ministry added three new facilities, and added beds in others, to increase total capacity by 74 beds.

TABLE 53

Emergency Shelters (Including Transition Houses) and Safe Homes, Number of Facilities, Total Capacity and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Number of Facilities	Safe Homes	Total Capacity	Expenditures
1990/91	48	11	502	$7,525,039
1989/90	45	11	428	5,664,298
1988/89	42	11	438	4,809,100
1987/88	39	8	378	4,277,744
1986/87	39	8	366	3,584,022

Hostels for Transients

Services are contracted in hostels to provide short-term accommodation for transient single people and couples without children. Expenditures for 1990/91 were $2,815,757. Overall hostel capacity has decreased because, as larger facilities close, they are replaced by smaller facilities in other communities.

TABLE 54

Hostels for Transients, Number of Facilities, Total Capacity and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Number of Facilities	Total Capacity[1]	Expenditures
1990/91	26	490	$2,815,757
1989/90	24	561	2,715,311
1988/89	24	558	2,317,734
1987/88	25	598	2,514,694
1986/87	23	592	2,518,466

[1] Figures refer to adult capacity and per diem rates only.

User Fees for Long-Term Care

The ministry will pay the standard user fee (set by the Ministry of Health) for persons residing in long-term care facilities who are unable to meet the cost themselves. Expenditures in 1990/91 totalled $19,177,260.

Shared Alcohol and Drug Programs

The ministry will also pay the user charge in drug and alcohol facilities (currently $16.40 per day) for eligible persons who could not afford treatment otherwise. Expenditures in 1990/91 were $862,880.

TABLE 55
Shared Alcohol and Drug Facilities, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$ 862,880
1989/90	932,697
1988/89	1,061,816
1987/88	1,313,978
1986/87	1,269,208

Family Maintenance Program

The Family Maintenance Program helps recipients of income assistance obtain the maintenance or child support payments to which they are entitled from the person who is legally responsible to pay.

The program has three objectives: to ensure family breakdown does not impoverish dependent family members or place an excessive burden on public funds; to relieve single parents of the struggle to obtain financial support for their families; and to assist people receiving income assistance to achieve financial independence by obtaining adequate, regularly-paid maintenance.

In British Columbia, almost 45 per cent of single parents receive income assistance. The majority of these do not receive regular maintenance or child support payments.

The Family Maintenance Program operates under the authority of the *GAIN Act*. This gives government the legal right to pursue maintenance payments on behalf of clients.

The 51 family maintenance workers located across the province first work to obtain maintenance for clients by agreement. If an agreement is not reached the case goes to court and a maintenance order may be issued. New orders are filed for monitoring and enforcement with the Ministry of Attorney General's Family Maintenance Enforcement Program to ensure monitoring and enforcement action if necessary.

The ministry has the authority to pursue any maintenance to which its clients are entitled. In cases where it would not be appropriate to proceed, however, discretion can be used.

In 1990/91 more than 23,000 referrals were made to the program.

Employment Initiatives Programs

The Employment Initiatives programs are the main vehicle through which the ministry helps income assistance recipients become self-supporting.

The programs combine wage subsidies, funding for education, and retraining and employment incentives to help people enter the work force.

Employment Initiatives program budgets are allocated to each region of the ministry. Financial assistance workers and rehabilitation officers in field offices are responsible for determining eligibility, and most expenditures are authorized at the local level.

Employment Initiatives Project

The Employment Initiatives Project coordinates the ministry's involvement in provincial and federal training initiatives, including the federal government's Canadian Job Strategy programs provided under the Canada/B.C. Agreement on employment and training for income assistance recipients. This agreement was renewed for yet another year as negotiations began to extend the agreement for a five-year period. The EIP team also developed the ministry's employment initiative programs, Employment Plus.

TABLE 56

Opportunities to Independence Programs, Expenditures, 1990/91

Employment Plus	
Employment Opportunity Program	$10,290,644
Community Tourism Employment Program	5,215,882
Environment Youth Corps	3,963,701
Forestry Enhancement Program	4,532,280
Job Action Program	3,547,202
Regionally-Initiated Special Employment Projects	2,348,701
Assistance to Employment	
Educational, Vocational and Rehabilitative Training	3,647,187
Work Clothing and Transportation	3,999,589
Incentive Allowance for Employment Program	272,092
Day Care Surcharge	425,114
Work Activity Projects	331,260
Total Expenditures for 1990/91 fiscal year	$38,581,652

Employment Plus

Employment Opportunity Program (EOP)

Under this program the ministry offers a 50 per cent wage subsidy to employers who will hire and train a client receiving temporary assistance or income assurance. The subsidy consists of a maximum contribution of $3.50/hour per trainee for a maximum of six months.

Pam is a single parent with two children. She was a long-term income assistance recipient prior to placement under the EOP at a local highways maintenance company. One year after completion of the subsidy she is still working full time in the payroll section.

Connie, a single parent with four children, had been on income assistance for more than four years before being placed with the Legal Aid Society under the EOP. She worked there for one year after completion of her subsidy and is now attending university in preparation for a career as a lawyer.

The program has two objectives. It provides the ministry's clients with an opportunity to develop and upgrade work skills and eventually gain employment, and it promotes the development of small business by enabling employers to hire additional staff.

A total of $10,298,644 funded 3,694 employers and created 6,900 jobs in 1990/91.

In Vancouver, the Chinese Cultural Centre Dragon Boat Festival Association hired and trained eight income assistance recipients to restore nine dragon boats. Before work could begin, the new employees had to design and build hoists to lift the dragon boats, which are 40 feet long and weigh 2,000 pounds each.

Community Tourism Employment Training Program

Through this program the ministry supplies the wages (up to $7.00/hour for laborers and $10.00/hour for supervisors) as well as the employers' share of employee benefits (CPP, UIC, WCB and Vacation Pay) for clients hired by nonprofit organizations to work on community tourism development projects.

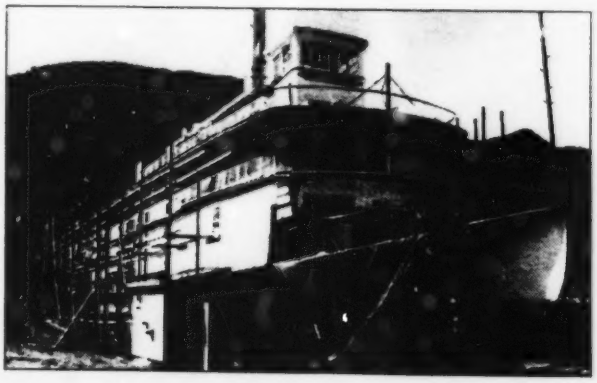
The goals of the program are to help clients become independent through employment while providing communities with funding to enable them to undertake projects to enhance their tourism potential.

In 1990/91 this program funded a wide range of tourism projects from heritage site restorations to parks development and festival start-ups.

The program is popular. Organizations are pleased with the ministry's screening and referral process, with the work of ministry clients, and with the fact that they are able to initiate long sought-after tourism projects.

In Prince Rupert the North Pacific Cannery is being restored with funds provided under the Community Tourism Employment Training program. Eight income assistance recipients have been employed and trained in reconstructing this cannery.

A total of $5,215,882 funded 215 projects and created 939 jobs in 1990/91.



Thirty-two income assistance recipients are helping to restore the world's oldest sternwheeler, the SS Moyie, *to its former glory. During their employment on this world-class heritage project in Kaslo they have been trained in many aspects of restoration work.*

Environment Youth Corps: Income Assistance Component

Employment and training opportunities in environment enhancement activities are provided for ministry clients between the ages of 17 and 24 under the Environment Youth Corps: Income Assistance Component.

This program is operated in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment and is managed through contracts with the Outdoor Recreation Foundation of British Columbia. The program offers six-month positions in such projects as trail improvement and salmon enhancement. Young income assistance recipients, recipients of Handicapped Benefits, Children-in-Care (CIC) and Children in the Home of a Relative (CIHR) are eligible to participate.

In 1990/91 expenditures totalled $3,963,701. Forty-five communities received funding and 570 clients were employed.

Forest Enhancement Program

This program provides six-month employment and training opportunities for income assistance recipients in forestry enhancement work throughout the province. The program is funded by this ministry, but is administered by the Ministry of Forests through silviculture contractors. The Ministry of Social Services and Housing provides the participants' wages of $7 per hour.

In 1990/91 the program employed 562 clients at a total cost of $4,532,280.

Job Action Programs

The Job Action programs provide job-ready, employable income assistance recipients with effective job-finding skills.

The programs, which run up to five weeks in length, combine classroom learning with actual job searches. Participants learn to assess their skills, obtain job interviews and present their skills effectively in interviews. Participants also receive an allowance of up to $150 for program-related expenses such as transportation, personal grooming and clothing.

In the 1990/91 fiscal year $3,547,202 was spent through the Job Action programs; 3,902 clients were served.

Regionally-Initiated Special Employment (RISE) Projects

In 1990/91 the ministry provided funding for 41 regionally-initiated projects in eight regions. The purpose of the projects was to develop targeted services based on unique client or employment conditions in the region, and to pilot innovative employment strategies for possible broader application in the future.

Expenditures totalled $2,348,701 for the fiscal year.

Assistance to Employment

Educational, Vocational and Rehabilitative Training

The ministry will pay the costs related to educational and vocational training programs to prepare income assistance recipients for employment.

In order to qualify for the program, an applicant must already be receiving GAIN or Handicapped Benefits. Further, all other sources of funding must be explored before costs can be provided for educational or vocational training. Clients may participate in ministry-funded training for up to three years.

This program assisted 18,300 clients in 1990/91. Expenditures totalled $3,647,187.

Work Clothing and Transportation

The ministry will help income assistance recipients and recipients of Handicapped Benefits explore realistic employment opportunities, and obtain and keep employment, by assisting with the costs of work clothing and transportation.

A work clothing allowance may be provided to a client who has a job interview or confirmed employment.

A transportation allowance may be provided to assist with a local job search, transportation to a confirmed interview or a confirmed job out of the local area. As well, a transportation allowance of up to $90 per month, for up to one year, may be provided to clients who become employed.

Expenditures for 1990/91 totalled $3,999,589.

Incentive Allowance for Employment

Income assistance recipients are encouraged to gain work experience through voluntary work with private sector employers, and public or nonprofit organizations. To assist with this the ministry will provide an allowance, for up to six months, to help with related expenses such as transportation and suitable clothing.

In 1990/91, $272,092 was spent assisting 1,011 program participants.

Bridging Benefits

Single parents who leave income assistance and become employed can continue receiving assistance of up to $150 a month for one year toward any day care surcharge. A day care surcharge is the difference between the actual cost of day care and the maximum assistance available as a day care subsidy. In addition, the single parent can receive a transportation allowance and medical coverage for up to one year. Expenditure for day care surcharge for 1990/91 totalled $425,114 and assisted 300 clients.

Work Activity Projects

The Work Activity Projects combine life skills training, educational upgrading, counselling and work experience to provide a comprehensive approach to social rehabilitation and to resolve the personal or family problems a client may be facing.

To qualify for the projects, an income assistance recipient must show serious barriers to employment such as a lack of work skills, low educational level, low self-esteem, poor life skills, and personal or family problems that interfere with his or her ability to adjust to the work force. The recipient must also be motivated to participate in the program.

A total of $331,260 was spent assisting 74 clients on Work Activity Projects in 1990/91.

Earnings Exemptions

Eligible recipients who have received income assistance for three consecutive months may keep a portion of their job earnings to assist with work-related expenses. The policy allows for an earnings exemption of up to $50 per month for single persons and up to $100 per month for single persons with handicaps and persons with dependants.

The Enhanced Earnings Exemption was introduced to help recipients become independent of income assistance. In the fourth month on assistance, recipients qualify for the standard earnings exemption. In addition,

employable and handicapped recipients qualify for an exemption of 25 per cent of their monthly earnings on amounts above the standard exemption, until their earnings are too high to qualify for benefits, or for up to 12 months. An additional six months may be approved at the discretion of the ministry. Recipients with handicaps receive the exemption indefinitely.

Where it would be to their advantage, unemployable clients may choose to participate in this program.

TABLE 57

Earnings Exemptions, Number of Cases, as of January 1991

Recipient	Cases With Flat Exemption	Cases With Enhanced Exemption	Total Cases Using an Exemption
Income Assistance	3,838	6,078	9,916
Handicapped Benefits	1,167	812	1,979
Inclusive	5,005	6,890	11,895

Ministry Investigators Program

The objective of the Investigators Program is to prevent fraud and abuse of the Programs For Independence. Under the direction of the area managers, 34 investigators review all reports of fraud and program abuse. In addition, there is a policy coordinator as well as an investigator based in the office of the Comptroller General.

The ministry has the authority to prosecute fraudulent acts through the criminal courts. Emphasis, however, is on prevention of fraud rather than after-the-fact investigation and prosecution, and the investigators work with ministry staff to find ways of identifying fraudulent information on applications for assistance.

In the 1990/91 fiscal year 10,169 reports of fraud were investigated, resulting in 208 criminal charges being laid against 122 people. A further 2,961 settlements were negotiated without court action, resulting in the recovery of $3,775,448.

As it can be assumed that fraudulent claims and overpayments would have continued if left undetected, the total savings achieved by the program cannot be estimated. As well, savings resulting from the preventive nature of the program cannot be measured.

TABLE 58

Investigations, Number of Cases Referred to Ministry Investigators, by Month, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Month	1990/91	1989/90	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
April	814	617	504[1]	656	825
May	854	646	324	753	849
June	838	762	567	778	642
July	792	539	351	780	853
August	772	587	659	673	687
September	855	577	412	736	817
October	921	635	539	909	762
November	830	632	633	849	711
December	723	494	471	624	545
January	1,002	840[2]	716	731	908
February	871	814	531	751	871
March	897	867	622	701	818
Total	10,169	8,110	6,329	8,941	9,288

[1] Under-reporting due to ministry reorganization.
[2] New reporting system instituted in January 1990.

TABLE 59

Ministry Investigators Program, Statistical Data Covering All Regions, 1986/87 to 1990/91

	1990/91[1]	1989/90[2]	1988/89	1987/88	1986/87
Total Cases Reported for Investigation	10,169	8,110	6,329	8,941	9,288
Charges Laid	122	98	126	218	195
Investigations Completed	10,683	9,158	6,441	8,904	9,215
Settlements Negotiated Out of Court	2,961	2,378	2,187	2,898	2,054
Recovered Funds	$3,775,448	$3,017,103	$3,120,185	$3,663,500	$2,607,432
Total Monthly Assistance Terminated Due to Investigators Program	$744,458	$519,437	$1,218,418	$571,232	$488,219
Total Monthly Cases Terminated	1,321	1,348	1,008	1,308	1,317
Investigation Staff	36	35	35	29	29

[1] New reporting system began January 1990
[2] Under-reporting due to ministry reorganization.

SECTION 8

Health Services

HEALTH SERVICES

Highlights of 1990/91

- Health Services was made a separate division within the ministry in late 1989.

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH SERVICES

The objectives of the Health Services programs are to provide medical coverage through the Medical Services Plan of British Columbia (MSP) to eligible clients, and to assist with the costs of required medical equipment, supplies and services. The program is administered under the statutory authority of the GAIN Regulations (section 29).

Staff monitor policy application and the health services budget, and provide field offices with information pertaining to policy interpretation, available health care services and community resources. The section also arranges the purchase of major medical equipment and ongoing medical supplies, and directly administers the dental program and health aspects of the At Home program.

A Health Services program budget is allocated to each region of the ministry. Field offices are responsible for determining financial eligibility for services.

In 1990/91 expenditures totalled $32,274,749.

TABLE 60

Health Care Services, Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Expenditures
1990/91	$30,652,673
1989/90	32,274,749
1988/89	30,504,176
1987/88	29,646,934
1986/87	37,480,249

Medical Coverage and At Home Children

Medical Services Plan coverage is available for unemployable persons, children-in-care, recipients of Handicapped Benefits, single parents of dependent children, persons over 65 who were eligible for assistance before turning 65 and recipients of Child in Home of Relative (CIHR) benefits, where coverage is not available through the child's natural parents. In 1990/91 MSP was provided for an average of 154,500 individuals per month. Premiums are paid by the Ministry of Health.

Medical Equipment and Supplies

Necessary supplies and equipment are available for eligible people who are not residing in Ministry of Health facilities and where there are no alternative sources of funding. In certain circumstances assistance may be offered to non-clients with an essential health need. In 1990/91 the ministry purchased or leased beds, mobility aids, respirators, and other items at a cost of $5,434,568.

Medical Transportation/Accommodation

Funds are available to assist with the costs of travel for non-emergency medical treatment. The program covers local transportation, as well as in- and out-of-province travel, meals, accommodation, escorts, and costs associated with the post-surgical recovery period. In 1990/91 expenditures totalled $5,069,098.

At Home Program

The At Home program helps families of severely disabled children deal with the extraordinary emotional, educational, social and financial challenges involved in caring for their children at home. It operates as a partnership among parents, community representatives, charitable organizations and government. During 1990/91 approximately 1,500 children received benefits under the program.

Dental Program

Persons who have ministry-sponsored health coverage are eligible for general diagnostic and preventive dental care to a maximum of $500 per year ($700 for children). People receiving income assistance who do not have ministry-sponsored health coverage may receive emergency dental coverage to provide treatment for relief of pain only. Payment for orthodontic services is available for children. Adult orthodontic services may be

covered in certain circumstances. In 1990/91 Dental Program expenditures totalled $16,035,828.

Miscellaneous Therapies

The ministry provides extended coverage for essential therapies including physiotherapy, massage and chiropractic treatments to eligible recipients and children-in-care. Expenditures in 1990/91 came to $122,196.

Optical Services

This program assists eligible clients with the costs of lenses, frames and selected optical hardware. In 1990/91, 28,450 requests were processed at a cost of $2,394,282.

TABLE 61

Gross Costs of Health Care Services, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Medical[1]	Drugs[2]	Dental	Optical	Transport	Others[3]	Total
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
1990/91	—	—	16,035,828	2,394,282	5,069,098	9,353,541	30,852,673
1989/90	—	—	20,497,232	2,551,839	4,406,780	4,818,898	32,274,749
1988/89	—	—	19,681,841	2,511,660	3,910,060	4,400,615	30,504,176
1987/88	34,812	—	19,534,925	2,539,113	3,794,687	3,743,397	29,646,934
1986/87	9,060,880	163,570,064	18,905,308	2,494,492	3,908,339	3,111,229	201,050,312

[1] As of 1987/88, medical costs no longer include payment for Medical Services Plan premiums or hospital co-insurance charges.

[2] Drug costs reported are those incurred under the Pharmacare Program which was transferred to the Ministry of Health, effective April 1, 1987.

[3] These costs include purchase of medical equipment, physiotherapy services, psychology services, speech and occupational therapy and miscellaneous minor services.

SECTION 9

Services to Seniors

INTRODUCTION TO SERVICES TO SENIORS

The 75+ age group is the fastest-growing segment of the population in Canada today. As the provincial population ages, more services for the elderly are required. In recognition of this, the ministry offers a variety of programs designed to meet the special needs of seniors and to support and enhance their independence, health and well-being.

The programs include the Seniors Supplement, Seniors Benefits, the Bus Pass program, the Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) program, and the Senior Citizen Counsellors Program.

Seniors Supplement

Senior citizens who receive the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) as well as Old Age Security (OAS) benefits and Spouses Allowance are guaranteed a minimum monthly income by the province. Benefits are paid automatically using information obtained from the Old Age Security division of Health and Welfare Canada.

Provincial rates are determined on the basis of the senior's federal OAS and GIS and other declared income. A provincial rate level is set to bring the monthly income up to a current minimum level.

As the number of people receiving federal GIS has decreased over the last several years as a result of increased pension incomes, the number of recipients of the provincial Seniors Supplement has also been reduced.

As of March 1991, the number of provincial Seniors Supplement recipients totalled 41,070, a reduction of 4,965 from the previous year. Expenditures for the fiscal year were $18,936,884.

TABLE 62

Seniors Supplement, Recipients and Expenditures, as of March, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Recipients	Expenditures
1990/91	41,070	$18,936,884
1989/90	46,035	21,202,673
1988/89	50,006	22,661,000
1987/88	45,012	20,486,940
1986/87	42,796	16,044,659

Seniors Benefits

Benefits are available to seniors who do not receive Old Age Security benefits. In March 1991 there were 1,697 recipients.

Benefits for Mixed Families with Old Age Security Component

Benefits are also provided for families where at least one member is over the age of 65 and receives federal Old Age Security benefits, and where other family members qualify for benefits under other income assistance programs. In March 1991, 283 families qualified for assistance under this program.

Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER)

The SAFER program provides direct cash assistance to senior citizens, aged 60 and over, on low to moderate incomes who pay more than 30 per cent of their gross income for rent. The amount subsidized is calculated as a percentage of the difference (the rent gap) between the rent level an applicant pays (up to the rent ceiling) and 30 per cent of the applicant's gross income.

To be eligible for SAFER, an applicant must:

- be receiving or be entitled to receive the Canadian Old Age Security pension or supplement, or be 60 years of age or older and have ten years of continuous residency in Canada after the age of 18;
- be the renter of a principal residence in British Columbia;
- have resided (or spouse has resided) in British Columbia for one continuous year immediately prior to application;
- not be receiving income assistance;
- not be residing in a care facility (licensed or unlicensed) funded by any ministry of the province.

TABLE 63

SAFER, Average Monthly Benefits, Total SAFER Cases and Expenditures, 1986/87 to 1990/91

Year	Average Benefits/Mth for Singles (to March)	Average Benefits/Mth for Couples (to March)	Average Benefits/Mth for Sharers (to March)	Total Cases	Expenditures
1990/91	$142.41	$73.34	$83.72	10,808	$16,000,948
1989/90	116.63	45.40	63.09	9,595	10,422,726
1988/89	58.99	10.03	—	7,722	5,729,134
1987/88	63.15	15.04	—	8,436	6,498,907
1986/87	66.89	20.84	—	8,997	7,140,658

Bus Pass Program

The ministry's Bus Pass Program permits eligible recipients to purchase a one-year pass at a reduced rate to travel on the public transit system. It is provided to encourage and aid the mobility of low-income seniors and people with handicaps.

To be eligible for a bus pass an individual must be a resident of British Columbia; receive the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), Spouses Allowance or provincial Seniors Supplement; be 60 years of age or older and receiving income assistance; or be designated as handicapped and receive Handicapped Benefits.

The bus pass is not valid on HandyDart or on private systems, but can be used on the Skytrain part of the Greater Vancouver public transit system. Most pass-holders live in the area served by the Greater Vancouver system; Victoria ranks second.

As of January 1, 1991 the cost to the recipient was $39 per year.

TABLE 64

Bus Passes, Gross Payments to B.C. Transit, and Number of Passes Issued, at December 31, by District

District	Gross Payments (March 31, 1991)	Number (December 31, 1991)
Greater Vancouver	$7,035,233	25,981
Greater Victoria	973,379	4,177
Other Communities	422,780	3,507
Total	8,431,392	33,665

TABLE 65

Bus Passes, Number of Holders, as of December 31, 1986 to 1990

Year	Number
1990	33,665
1989	33,625
1988	26,878
1987	32,735
1986	32,879

SECTION 10

Housing

HOUSING

Highlights of 1990/91

- There were 1,789 new units of social housing allocated throughout the province under the 1990 federal-provincial social housing budget. These units will provide homes for low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities. They are located as follows: 1,230 in the Lower Mainland, 353 on Vancouver Island and 206 in the Interior and Northern British Columbia.

- A total of 6,559 units were committed under the British Columbia Rental Supply Program, which aims to relieve the shortage of moderately-priced rental housing in low-vacancy communities.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HOUSING MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Financial reports for the British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BCHMC) are prepared on a calendar year cycle. Consequently figures reported here are for December 31, 1990. Additional information is available in the BCHMC's annual report.

BCHMC was established under the *Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act* and by Order in Council No. 2388 of September 7, 1978. Since 1989 it has been authorized under the *Ministry of Social Services and Housing Act.* Although it does not administer any specific legislation, its expenditures are authorized under the *National Housing Act* and the *Ministry of Social Services and Housing Act.* It is the arm of the ministry responsible for the delivery of the federal-provincial Social Housing Program in British Columbia. BCHMC also administers other provincial housing initiatives, such as the B.C. Rental Supply Program.

Commission Organization

BCHMC's Home Office is located in Burnaby. The Commission also has Regional and Area Offices in Vancouver, Burnaby, Penticton, Victoria, Prince George and Prince Rupert.

The Programs

Federal-Provincial Social Housing Program

Social housing is housing that is subsidized to provide people most in need with adequate, affordable shelter. These are people with low to moderate incomes. They may be families, seniors, older singles or people with disabilities. BCHMC also helps those with special needs, such as people with mental illness, or those undergoing alcohol or drug rehabilitation.

The social housing system is based on the premise that people in need should not have to pay more than 30 per cent of their income for rent. The federal and provincial governments provide the funds for subsidies which make up the shortfall between what tenants can afford to pay and the actual cost of the accommodation.

Caleopy Park, a social housing development in Vancouver, has 22 units for families and 36 for seniors.

Over the years about 61,700 units of social housing have been provided in British Columbia through various initiatives involving community groups, companies in the private sector and government agencies. The Province has played a direct role in about 40,700 of these units, either by administering agreements or providing grants, land or subsidies. BCHMC acts as property manager for 7,700 of these units built prior to 1980.

Developing New Social Housing

In 1986 the provincial government signed new agreements with the federal government which gave the Province the lead responsibility for delivering new social housing. Since then the two levels of government have worked together to produce 9,188 new units of social housing in British Columbia.

Funding for all post-1986 programs is shared according to the same formula: the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) contributes 67 per cent and BCHMC contributes 33 per cent. Post-1986 programs are categorized as follows:

- **Nonprofit Regular Program**

  This program includes housing units developed by private nonprofit societies, public housing corporations and a few cooperative associations. It subsidizes self-contained housing units for tenants who can live independently. Tenants pay 30 per cent of their income for rent.

  An open proposal call is used to select the projects that will be developed. Once a project is developed, societies receive subsidies that make up the difference between the break-even rent for the project and rents paid by tenants.

- **Nonprofit Special Facilities Program**

  This program assists support ministries such as Social Services and Housing and Health to provide housing for adults with disabilities who need on-site care. A subsidy makes up the difference between the cost of the facility and the residents' shelter contribution.

- **Nonprofit Special Purpose Program**

  This program assists support ministries to provide crisis or transitional housing. It also provides housing for children, and for people with disabilities who require some nursing care. The subsidy is in the form of a mortgage write-down to a two per cent interest rate.

- **Private Market Rent Supplement Programs**
  BCHMC may enter into agreements for privately-owned rental units for which tenants will receive a subsidy enabling them to pay the market rent. These units may be leased from the private market or located in federal cooperatives built after 1986.

B.C. Rental Supply Program

Established in 1989 to increase the supply of rental housing in low-vacancy areas throughout the province, the program works by reducing interest costs on projects which meet provincial objectives. Early in 1990 the provincial government doubled its overall financial commitment to the B.C. Rental Supply Program to a total of $80 million.

Projects were selected for development through three competitive proposal calls which helped to ensure good value for provincial funds. Proposals were evaluated on ten factors including design, location, rent structure, rental tenure and subsidy cost.

At December 31, 1990 a total of 6,559 units had been committed under the program; of these 1,136 were complete, 783 were under construction, and 4,640 were awaiting municipal or financial approvals.

Matching Start-Up Grants

BCHMC provides start-up grants to nonprofit societies to develop unsubsidized rental housing for seniors. Grants totalling $191,000 were issued to 12 societies for projects throughout the province.

Other Programs

A variety of additional programs are administered through BCHMC. Information is available in the Commission's annual report.

Social Housing Allocation

There were 1,789 new units of social housing allocated throughout the province under the 1990 federal-provincial social housing budget. These units will provide homes for low-income families, seniors and people with disabilities. They are located as follows: 1,230 in the Lower Mainland, 353 on Vancouver Island; and 206 in the Interior and Northern British Columbia.

TABLE 66

Social Housing Allocation for 1990

Category	Nonprofit	Rent Supplement	Special Facilities	Special Purpose	Total
Seniors/Older Singles	466	199	—	—	485
Families	776	92	—	—	868
Disabled	42	62	—	—	104
Special Units	—	—	228	104	332
Total	1,284	353	228	104	1,789

Federal-Provincial Cost Sharing

The federal and provincial governments share costs for British Columbia's social housing programs. Net expenditures by BCHMC for 1990 were $68,499,261 of which $64,903,826 was eligible for cost sharing. CMHC contributed $40,607,229 of this amount.

SECTION 11

Ministry Administration

MINISTRY ADMINISTRATION

Highlights of 1990/91

- The Property Services Branch began the fiscal year with 108 office accommodation projects underway. During the year an additional 60 office locations or major renovations were started, and by the end of the fiscal year 99 new offices were already in use. Ministry-specific office accommodation standards, designed and implemented by the Property Services Branch the previous fiscal year, were updated. Particular attention was paid to office design and its potential to reduce employee/client tension and the risk of critical incidents in the workplace.
- Records management services were improved through an upgrade of the Records Management Unit. In addition to processing all hard copy files for off-site storage, RMU will also be equipped to handle tapes and other special media records.
- A four-day conference on human resource planning and management was attended by all ministry executive, directors, managers and personnel officers.
- New human resources programs included the ministry Health and Attendance Promotion program and the Critical Incident program.
- The establishment of regional personnel offices at all regional locations was completed.
- Programs for Independence (PFI) Release 5 was implemented in March 1991 and streamlined district office procedures significantly for administrative support staff and financial assistance workers.

MINISTRY ADMINISTRATION

There are nine support divisions offering centralized support services to ministry staff: Administrative Services, Audit Services, Communications, Corporate Services, Federal/Provincial Agreements, Financial Planning, Financial Services, Personnel and Staff Training, and Systems Services.

Administrative Services Division

There are four branches in the Administrative Services Division: Asset Management and Supply Services, Offices Services, Procedural Services and Property Services.

Asset Management and Supply Services

The Asset Management and Supply Services Branch implements and maintains asset management systems and vehicle fleet operation procedures; purchases furniture, office equipment, printing services and vehicles; and coordinates the mail service. The branch is the main contact with the Queen's Printer, Vehicle Management, and Postal Services branches of the Ministry of Government Management Services.

Office Services Branch

The Office Services Branch maintains the staff telephone directory, staff list and mailing lists for manuals; controls and distributes manual amendments and operational directives; and provides administrative support for the division.

Procedural Services Branch

The Procedural Services Branch develops office procedures, analyses, designs and supplies forms and monitors the production and quality of manuals for the ministry. The branch also coordinates records management, using the Administrative Records Classification System for records storage, retrieval and disposal. Retention periods for a number of records series were assessed as part of the preliminary design of the Operational Records Classification System.

Property Services Branch

The Property Services Branch works with the British Columbia Buildings Corporation and ministry staff to design and manage the acquisition of new offices and the renovation of existing office space. Responsibility for coordinating all ministry housing for clients, group homes, etc., was transferred to this branch, effective January 1992.

Audit Services Division

The Audit Services Division monitors ministry systems and operations to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control systems, and to determine whether policy is correctly and uniformly administered throughout the ministry.

Audit Services reports directly to the Office of the Deputy Minister. This ensures audit findings and recommendations are considered at the highest management level while allowing the division the independence it needs to meet its objectives.

Audit appraisal activities are coordinated through an audit committee. The committee, which forms a direct link with the ministry executive, endorses audit activities and promotes interest in establishing and maintaining good systems of internal control.

TABLE 67
Audits Completed 1990/91

Ministry District and Resources	44
Nonprofit Organizations Funded by the Ministry	4

Communications Division

The Communications Division plans and implements public communications, manages issues, informs the public of ministry activities and programs, and coordinates the production of public communications released by the ministry.

The Division produces pamphlets, annual reports, bulletins, newsletters and other publications. It prepares and issues all ministry news releases and handles media inquiries. It manages the production of videos, television, radio and print advertisements.

Division staff work with program and field staff to develop communications projects to meet a variety of needs. Staff work with the Minister and Executive to manage issues and to communicate with the public and stakeholders about issues and activities.

The Division also responds to a large number of inquiries from the public.

During 1990/91 the accomplishments of the Division included:

- The first Lieutenant-Governor's Awards to Foster Families were presented in June 1990.
- Posters and stickers describing the Helpline for Children were distributed to all elementary schools and day care centres.
- Employment Plus print and television advertisements ran three times during the year and resulted in a good response by employers who hired and trained income assistance clients.

Corporate Services Division

Three branches make up the Corporate Services Division: Emergency Social Services; Research, Evaluation and Statistics; and Policy, Planning and Legislation.

Emergency Social Services Branch

Emergency Social Services (ESS) is feeding, clothing, counselling, shelter and registration of victims, evacuees and response workers during civil emergencies and disasters. The Emergency Social Services Branch assists municipalities in planning these services and provides coordination and additional resources to augment municipal efforts during major disasters.

In 1990/91 the ministry continued its training program for municipal volunteers throughout the province and, in October, conducted a major Reception Centre Operation training exercise in Kelowna for municipal ESS directors from all regions of the province. As of March 1991 there were over 1,500 ESS volunteers registered with the Provincial Emergency Program.

The branch continued to lead the provincial ESS support team made up of the Canadian Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the British Columbia Housing Management Commission, the British Columbia Retail Merchants Association and the Restaurant and Food Services Association of British Columbia. This team is assembling a pool of additional resources to be made available to municipalities during major disasters.

Policy, Planning and Legislation Branch

As a result of rapid changes in the social and economic environment, the need for long-range planning by public sector organizations has become increasingly critical. The Policy, Planning and Legislation Branch is responsible for establishing and coordinating the ministry's annual planning cycle and for publishing the annual strategic planning document. This ensures that, consistent with the overall direction and goals of the government, the ministry sets and pursues its goals and objectives in a rational way and establishes a direction which is clear and understood.

Branch staff coordinate the ministry's annual legislative program to ensure a sound legislative base for existing programs and services and new initiatives. Staff also play a lead role in developing corporate policy in

Contract Management, Women's Programs, Freedom of Information and Risk Management.

In 1990/91 the branch produced the second ministry Business Plan outlining the ministry's goals, values, strategic priorities and major program initiatives. The regional environmental scan, The Challenge Ahead, was published in January 1991.

Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

The Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch is responsible for implementing the ministry's comprehensive evaluation program and for developing the statistical systems required to monitor and evaluate all ministry programs. The branch undertakes and supports the analysis of various legislative, policy and program proposals and provides regular management reports for senior management and executive.

The branch also provides the ministry with a social and economic research capacity to focus on more basic issues of fundamental importance to the ministry such as poverty, child sexual abuse, community living for the disabled, or the effect of the economy on social dependence.

The branch provides regular forecasts of income assistance caseloads and expenditures to support the ministry budget planning and monitoring process. It provides extensive socio-economic and demographic data and analysis to support the ministry's strategic planning initiative.

The ministry places a high priority on remaining well informed regarding developments taking place in other ministries, in academia and within other jurisdictions across Canada and internationally. As a member of the research community the branch is able to acquire a broad range of current experimental and basic program information for use in legislative, policy and program development as well as evaluation and research. In return, the branch supports this community by publishing research findings, providing basic data on our programs, and providing technical advice.

Comprehensive evaluations of programs are essential to effective service delivery and public accountability. In 1990/91 the branch undertook a number of evaluations:

- The second and third phases of ministry field reorganization — client and staff surveys — were completed. The service partners survey was subsequently completed, with the final report scheduled for release in April 1992.

- The second and third phases of the joint federal/provincial evaluation of employment and training programs for Income Assistance clients were completed. The final report of this five-year project is scheduled for May 1992.
- The second year of a pilot project to evaluate new techniques used in interviewing children suspected of being sexually abused was completed. This multi-year project will issue its final report in June 1992.
- The second year of the Community Living Evaluation project was completed with the production of two reports, one focusing on the involvement of parents in making placement decisions, the other on the adequacy of community-based nursing care. Several publications are currently in progress including a survey of stakeholders' expectations and a review of projects in other jurisdictions. A major longitudinal study is planned to commence in April 1992.
- The evaluation of the At Home program began, and an initial report describing the population of applicants was produced. Several other reports are planned, with the final evaluation scheduled for release in August 1992.
- The evaluation of the Supported Work Program was initiated. This final report for the project is scheduled for August 1992.
- The final report of the Special Needs Adoption pilot project was produced. This three-year project provided important program planning information for parents considering adopting a special needs infant.
- The evaluation of the B.C./Yukon Women's Shelter program was initiated. This joint project will produce its final report in March 1992.

A range of issue-specific studies was undertaken at the request of executive, program and regional management. As well, the branch provided extensive research support to projects initiated by program and regional management, such as program reviews, forecasting, policy and program development, and resource analysis.

Federal/Provincial Agreements Division

The Federal/Provincial Agreements Division is responsible for negotiations under three agreements between the province and the federal government. These agreements are: the Canada Assistance Plan Agreement (CAP), the Four Cornered Agreement to Enhance the Employability of Social Assistance Recipients, and the Memorandum of Understanding on Indian Child Welfare.

The division also works to ensure that ministerial and provincial priorities are considered when federal/provincial social policy is developed.

Canada contributes a significant share of the ministry's operation and program costs under the *Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) Act* of 1966. The Federal/Provincial Agreements Division works with divisional and program directors to ensure maximum cost-share revenue is recovered from the federal government for ministry programs.

To accomplish this, the division analyzes the cost-sharing implications of proposed policies, procedures and legislation. Any cost-sharing approved for ministry programs is managed through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) Accounting Office.

In February 1990 the federal government placed a two-year ceiling on CAP payments for the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, and the 1991 federal budget extended this ceiling for a further three years. As a result, growth in CAP payments is limited to five per cent for the fiscal years 1990/91 and 1995/96.

In 1990/91 the Federal/Provincial Agreements Division:

- provided expertise and background information for the court challenge to the federal ceiling on Canada Assistance Plan payments.
- co-chaired a federal/provincial working group which established a new multilateral framework for the development of new, bilateral agreements to enhance the employability of social assistance recipients.

Financial Planning Division

The Financial Planning Division has two components: the Financial Planning Section and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) Accounting Office.

Financial Planning Section

The Financial Planning Section is responsible for coordinating the budget preparation and review process; preparing financial forecasts during the fiscal year; financial management reporting; maintaining the ministry's Chart of Accounts; and ensuring compliance with instructions of Treasury Board and the Office of the Comptroller General.

CAP Accounting Office

The Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) Accounting Office is responsible for the administration of a cost-sharing agreement between the Province of British Columbia and the federal government. This agreement provides for the sharing of specific costs related to financial assistance and other welfare programs provided by the province through this and other ministries and by municipalities.

The agreement provides for a federal contribution of 50 per cent of eligible provincial and municipal expenditures. The federal budget of February 1990 imposed a ceiling of five per cent per year on federal payment increases in 1990/91 and 1991/92. This was later extended to 1994/95.

In 1990/91 ministry expenditures totalled $1,735.3 million, of which $1,387.1 million was eligible for cost sharing. Other ministries had shareable expenditures of $142.2 million, and municipalities submitted $3.2 million of eligible expenditures to be shared. Under the terms of the agreement, this would have resulted in revenues to the province of $766.3 million; however, the five per cent ceiling restricted the province's revenues to $725.3 million, a revenue loss of $41 million. In addition, there was a repayment of $6.9 million to the federal government resulting from adjustments to prior years' cost sharing.

The CAP Accounting Office also assists in recovery of costs of providing services to status Aboriginal children-in-care from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). In 1990/91 $16.5 million was recovered from INAC for these services.

Financial Services Division

The Financial Services Division is responsible for all of the ministry's financial and accounting functions with the exception of the budget preparation and monitoring process.

Division staff develop and implement all financial policies and procedures, and work closely with program divisions and Systems staff to ensure that financial controls are considered when new policies and systems are developed. They also ensure compliance with Treasury Board policies and central agency directives.

The division delivers four direct service programs: the Seniors Supplement, the Bus Pass program, the Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER) program and the Dental Services program.

Personnel and Staff Training Division

The division's services are delivered under the statutory authority of the *Public Service Act* and the *Public Service Labour Relations Act.* Specific policies are set by the Ministry of Finance, Government Personnel Services Division, and by ministry executive.

The Personnel and Staff Training Division maintains ministry personnel information and provides services in the areas of staff recruitment and selection, training, classification and organization, employee relations, occupational health and safety, statistical and ad hoc reports, and human resource planning.

Central personnel staff provide program and policy services to ministry executive and personnel programs support to regional personnel staff.

Regional personnel offices are located in Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Cloverdale, Nanaimo, New Westminster (Woodlands), Prince George, Vancouver, and Victoria. These regional offices provide direct personnel services to regional management and staff.

Staff Training

The ministry provides training in the skills and knowledge that are essential for its staff to carry out their job responsibilities. This training is offered through ministry core training programs for all staff new to their job roles. During 1990/91 approximately 1,470 people participated in this type of training.

Educational and training programs are also available to staff to encourage and support continuous career growth. To effectively offer these opportunities, a close working relationship has been established with our partners in education and the professions. The British Columbia Association of Social Workers (BCASW), schools of social work and community college social service programs assist the ministry by providing educational programs to enhance the capabilities of staff. This coordinated approach is a vital method of demonstrating commitment to ministry staff and ensuring a continuing resource of qualified employees. Special budgets in professional social work education and career enhancement have been established and approximately 130 staff participated in 1990/91.

The division directs a library service for the ministry, providing staff with province-wide access to materials and resources.

Positions

In 1990/91 the number of active ministry employees averaged 4,000 regular staff and 1,000 auxiliary staff. Auxiliary employees ensure the uninterrupted provision of client services, including direct care requirements for the residents of Woodlands. They also provide services to clients during periods of staff illness and to meet peak workload demands.

As of March 31, 1991 there were 4,317 full-time equivalent positions in the ministry. Of these positions, 3,078 were assigned to field services (social workers, financial assistance workers, rehabilitation officers, family maintenance workers, ministry inspectors and administrative support staff); 76 worked in After Hours; 673 were assigned to Woodlands (nurses, healthcare workers and other staff required to operate a 24-hour facility); 482 were in program divisions and headquarters offices; and eight positions were used to support projects.

Systems Services Division

The Systems Services Division is responsible for planning, developing, implementing, operating, supporting and maintaining data processing systems and services.

Activities of the division include providing education, staff training and documented support (manuals) on the systems available to the ministry. Systems staff also help other staff identify and solve systems problems, help set systems priorities, help select new systems, and work with ministry staff to establish systems security controls.

A number of projects were completed or initiated in 1990/91.

- The Social Work Services (SWS) project received Treasury Board approval. This project will provide support to social programs administered by the Family and Children's Services Division and the Community Support Services Division.
- The Leave Management System (LMS) was implemented in July 1990. The system records leave entitlement for employees versus actual leave taken.
- The Technology Directions Study was completed and an implementation plan will be developed.
- Release 5, an on-line system for financial assistance workers, was implemented across the province in March 1991. It has speeded up interviews, reduced paperwork and — by enabling clients to view their files as they are being written — given them a stronger sense of control over their own futures.

Implemented throughout the province

NEW SYSTEM SPE

Shelves that used to be full of bulging file folders are empty now that the Social Services office in Merritt has transferred to a new computerized system for storing client information. District supervisor Lynne Ray says the new system is much improved.
—(photo: the Merritt Herald)

By Susan Holmberg, News Editor

"It's just absolutely wonderful. Everybody loves it. The whole system is better because of it. It makes our jobs more efficient."

High praise indeed from Merritt Ministry of Social Services office manager Yvonne Cressy. And her thoughts are echoed by everyone at the Merritt office who is involved in the administration of financial assistance programs.

And what has prompted this adulation and ecstasy? A computer program.

But this is not just one isolated computer program, as district supervisor Lynne Ray explains.

Ray, who is responsible at the Merritt office for the administration of financial assistance services, says the recent implementation of a province-wide computerized system for all clients receiving financial assistance has created an enormous improvement in service to clients, as well as less work for social workers.

Called Release 5, the new computerized system allows the three financial assistance social workers to not only process client applications much faster, but also allows workers to access files of clients from all parts of the province, to either update them or to issue payments.

For example, says Ray, if a Merritt client who is receiving financial assistance for medical services should go to Vancouver for an appointment with a specialist, only to discover that an overnight stay is necessary, the client can go to a Vancouver social services office to request the additional financial assistance.

The social worker there will take "temporary electronic control" of the client's file from its home office in Merritt, and be able to issue the necessary payment.

EDS UP SERVICES

Once that transaction is complete, explains Ray, the file automatically reverts to its home office in Merritt, and the next time the Merritt worker opens that client's file he or she can see what has happened.

The same job would have been done without Release 5, but social workers would likely have started playing "telephone tag" between Vancouver and Merritt to verify what the client was claiming, and the paperwork would have been twice as great.

Naturally, explains Ray, the system, which was adopted province-wide March 4, has many security features.

Each person who accesses client files has a special key which records their entry into the file, and an office other than the home office can only "take control" of the file, to issue payments, through a two-person process.

A series of ever-changing passwords is another precautionary measure to ensure client files are kept secure.

One of the most immediate benefits from the new computerized system, which has been 10 years in development, is the time saving in processing initial applications for assistance.

What used to take up to two hours can now usually be done in less than an hour, because all the client information is immediately entered into a computer file, reducing the need for reams of paperwork.

Even the issuing of funds, if the client is eligible, is done by the computer.

And the client can watch everything being entered into the computer.

"The client watches as the file is set up. There's no hidden agenda," stresses Ray, and everything on the file is open for the client to see.

And the financial assistance files are only accessible by other financial workers around the province, and not by any other agency or government department.

While Ray says the new system, which allows files to be updated daily, no matter where the client is in the province, as opposed to weekly before Release 5, does minimize the opportunity for the financial assistance programs to be abused, but this is not the main purpose of Release 5.

"People's perception of the incidence of abuse of our system is far greater than fact bears out," says Ray.

And is the new system having any effect on the taxpayer's wallet?

In Merritt, yes. Despite there being 1,000 active financial files at the Merritt office in February, staff at the office has been reduced by half a person since Release 5 was implemented. When a full-time clerical worker moved away, she was replaced with a half-time person.

(Not all of the 1,000 clients receive full assistance, notes Ray. Of the 592 employable recipients, and the 422 unemployable recipients, many are just receiving small payments for special needs, or to top up earnings or other program benefits.)

"We are able to see more people more efficiently. It's a saving for the future," says Ray.

"I've been around for 16 years. This is the biggest technological advance in terms of client service I've seen," says worker Mary Letain.

High praise indeed.

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SECTION 12

Legislation Administered by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing

LEGISLATION ADMINISTERED BY THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

The Ministry of Social Services and Housing administered the following legislation during the 1990/91 fiscal year:

***Adoption Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 4, (Consolidated September 1985) and Regulations (BC Regulation 278-78) and Amendments.**

The purpose of this act is to provide the same rights and privileges for adopted children as for children born to parents in a family.

***Community Resource Board Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 58, (Consolidated January 1984) and Regulations (BC Regulation 655-75).**

This act empowers the government to establish human resource and health centres where provincial income assistance programs, social services and health services may be administered by boards composed of local citizens.

***Family and Child Service Act*, RSBC 1980, Chapter 11, (Consolidated September 1985) and Amendments.**

This act provides statutory procedures for protection and care of children who are neglected, abused, abandoned or living without proper supervision or guardianship.

***Guaranteed Available Income for Need Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 158, (Consolidated September 1985) and Regulations (BC Regulation 479-76), Consolidated January 1986) and Amendments.**

This act and its regulations provide for essential financial assistance and social services for eligible individuals and families. The social services include day care, family support services, residential care, counselling and rehabilitation services.

***Human Resource Facility Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 185 (Consolidated October 1982) and Regulations (BC Regulation 586-76).**

This act and its regulations authorize provincial grants to nonprofit organizations for the development of residential facilities or centres for children, disabled persons and senior citizens.

***Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 277.**

This act authorizes continuation of the British Columbia Housing Management Commission and authorizes the commission to act as agent of the crown. Order-in-council 1578 assigns powers, functions and duties to the Minister of Social Services and Housing.

***Ministry of Social Services and Housing Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 274, and Amendments.**

This act establishes the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Services and Housing in all matters relating to social and public welfare and income assistance.

***Residence and Responsibility Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 364, (Consolidated September 1984) and Regulations (BC Regulations 283-71 and 284-71).**

This act requires municipalities to contribute to the costs of specific social assistance programs for persons in need. (There have been no cases where the municipality has had to contribute since 1982.)

***Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 385, and Regulations (BC Regulation 298-77, Consolidated January 1984).**

This act provides for payment of monthly cash assistance to eligible residents of the province who receive Old Age Security benefits and who pay more than 30 per cent of their income on rent.

***Social Workers Act*, RSBC 1979, Chapter 389, (Consolidated January 1984).**

This act permits the government to establish the Board of Registration for social workers.

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